

Apud. Edinburgum.

*Vicesimo primo die Aprilis 1691  
post Meridiem.*

**T**HIS whilk day the Commission appointed by the late General Assembly of this Church, having considered Report from a Committee of their own number whom the said Commission had appointed to Revise two Manuscripts, written by the late Reverend Mr. Thomas Bell Minister of the Gospel, and Professor of Philology in the College of Edinburgh, and given into them by his Relick; the one wherein he treated of *Strikes in the Wilderness*, the other, *Nehemiah's Letter*, or *The Character of a good Commissioner*; whereby the said Committee declared that they having perused the saids Pieces, judged them to be solid and edifying Discourses; and that they thought they would be very useful and profitable. And the said Committee being well and ripely advised with the said Discourses, they do hereby recommend to the Relick of the said Assembly, that they would be pleased to have the said two Pieces printed and published with all convenient diligence. *Extraction, &c.*

Apud. Edinburgum.

*Vicesimo primo die Aprilis 1691  
post Meridiem.*

**T**HIS whilk day the Commission appointed by the late General Assembly of this Church, having considered Report from a Committee of their own number whom the said Commission had appointed to Revise two Manuscripts, written by the late Reverend Mr. Thomas Bell Minister of the Gospel, and Professor of Philology in the College of Edinburgh, and given into them by his Relick; the one wherein he treated of *Strikes in the Wilderness*, the other, *Nehemiah's Story*, or *The Character of a good Commissioner*; whereby the said Committee declared that they having perused the saids Pieces, judged them to be solid and edifying Discourses; and that they would be very useful and profitable. And the said Commission being well and ripely advised with the said Discourses, they do hereby recommend to the Relick of the said Mr. Thomas Bell, to get the said two Pieces printed and published with all convenient diligence. *Extractum, &c.*



NEHEMIAH

THE  
**Tirhatha:**

OR, THE

CHARACTER

OF A

Good Commissioner.

To which is Added

GRAPES

IN THE

Wilderness.

---

By Mr. THOMAS BELL, Minister of  
the Gospel, and Professor of Philosophy  
in the Colledge of *Edinburgh*.

---

EDINBURGH

Printed by *George Mosman*, who  
be sold at his Shop in *the*  
*Close*. Anno 1692.

---

=

I

I

for

an

T

ph

H

G

k

---

UNTO THE  
*Most Noble and Illustrious*  
P R I N C E S S  
T H E  
Dutcheſs of Hamiltoun.

• *May it pleaſe your Grace,*

I Have adventured, though  
not without bluſhing and  
ſome fear, becauſe of the vaſt diſ-  
tance, to dedicate and commit the  
Tutelage of theſe two little Or-  
phan treatiſes of my deceaſt  
Husband Mr Thomas Bell,  
*Grapes in the Wilderneſs,* and  
*The Character of a Commiſſioner,*

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

in the person of None-such  
*Nebemiab*, to your Grace the  
every way most fit and proper  
Person, under the benign in-  
fluence of whose encouraging  
countenance, he did for a con-  
siderable time preach the Gos-  
*pel* at *Hamiltoun*: And indeed if  
any other in the World could  
possibly rival it with your Grace  
in my esteem, yet could I not  
without the highest both Inju-  
stice and Ingratitude Dedicate  
them otherwayes, it having been  
to my certain knowledge his  
firm resolution, if ever they saw  
the light, that they should be de-  
dicated thus, whose will in

## The Epistle Dedicatory

Such things was alwayes, and is  
still to me as an inviolably ob-  
liging Law. I am very confi-  
dent your Grace will read them  
in Print after his death, with the  
same edifying complacency and  
delight that you had wont to  
hear him discourse by *vive voice*,  
in the Noble Family, and in the  
solemne Assembly, for really  
they resemble their Father to the  
very life: That I have therefore  
sent them abroad into the wide  
World, under the Patronage  
and Protection of your Graces  
Noble and Renowned Name,  
(which will sufficiently secure  
them against all the censures &

*The Epistle Dedicatory*

Cavills of the most malevolent  
Gargers of this ill natured Age  
will not be construed impardon-  
able presumption, is the humble  
hope of,

*Most Noble Princess,*

*Your Graces most humble,  
most obliged, and most*

*devoted Servant,*

*L. B. G. G. L. R.*

*L. B. G. G. L. R.*

*Joseph Watson*  
*ght* TO THE  
*this*  
**READER.**

Christian Reader, *The gift of*

**T**HE Discoveries that the Majesty  
of GOD, hath made of himself, in  
these latter dayes, are so transcon-  
dent, and eminently beyond what was  
in former Ages, that it may truly be said, that  
the Men of this Generation, shall be signally  
indebted, either to the Grace and Mercy, or Ju-  
stice of God. For in former Ages, the world was  
comparatively dark, & the Sun but rising near  
Horizon: But in this Age, the light of the Gospel  
(compared with former Generations) is like the  
light of the Sun, & the light of the Sun is  
as the light of seven dayes. But alas, the

## To the Reader.

walking in the light, may justly provoke the Lord  
to cause our Sun go down at noon. Beza complain-  
ed in his time that there was multum Scientiæ, and  
much Knowledge, but parum Conscientiæ, little  
Conscience; and how much more is there ground  
for this Complaint now? For since the Primi-  
tive and Apostolick Age, greater light hath  
not broken forth, and more Stars of the first and  
greatest magnitude, have not more clearly shin-  
ed in any age: But oh! how little walking  
there (utable to such great light? How many e-  
minent Christians were there in former ages,  
who had not so much all their dayes of the riches  
of free Grace discovered, and of the mysteries  
of the Gospel unfolded, as some in this Genera-  
tion have had in a very little time, who have  
far surpassed us in this Generation, foreminen-  
cy in Faith, Love, Holy Zeal, Prayer, and  
Wrestling with God, Patience, Meekness, di-  
ligence in duty, and a Gospel adorning conver-  
sation? And the generality have shut their eyes  
and will not behold the Glory of God, manifested  
in the Person of Jesus Christ, in this Gospel: For  
which cause, the holy and jealous God in great  
anger and holy indignation, hath removed ma-  
ny and eminent Candlesticks out of their place  
and taken away many shining and burning  
lights.



## To the Reader.

lights: not in their old age, and gray Hairs, but  
even in the flower of their age, and in the prime  
and flourishing of their Graces and Gifts. One  
of which was the Reverend (now Triumphant  
and Glorified) Author of these following Treas-  
ures. who was eminent for Piety and Learn-  
ing, as his Writtings do manifest. His Ro-  
man Antiquities, which he published before his  
death, cannot but commend his Learning to all  
knowing persons, and his Piety was so eminent  
to all that knew him, that he needs none of our  
Commendation: And these his Works (which  
are a specimen of his great Knowledge, Ene-  
rgy, piety and solid Judgement) will praise  
him in the gate, where he draws a Vive Picture  
and Pattern for all, but especially for Rulers and  
Magistrates to look on, and walk after. Which I  
am hopeful will be very acceptable to all the Ju-  
dicious and Godly. He I say was taken away in  
the flower of his Age, & flourishing of his Gifts:  
God not accounting the World worthy of him.  
And having left amongst his Papers these two  
Treatises (one of which was formerly published  
by a private Person, but without the knowledge  
and advice of the Authors Friends) some of his  
Friends, lovers of the publick Good, judged it

Born to see the light  
fit to be published

## To the Reader.

*expedient to review and correct these Treatises  
that they might be published for the good and e-  
dification of the Church, that he by them (though  
dead) might speak. Which we hope shall through  
Gods blessing, be very edifying, for overthrow-  
ing of Atheism, discovering of the Souls happiness  
in Union and Communion with God, directing  
great Persons in their duty, and holding forth  
the excellency of the Scripture, and pointing out  
to these who are walking in this Wilderness  
the way to the Heavenly Canaan, with many  
other edifying purposes; which that the Great  
God may bless, is the earnest Prayer of.*

Thy Servant in the Work  
of the Gospel.

M. C.

# NEHEMIAH

THE

## Tirhatha:

OR, THE

## CHARACTER

OF A

## Good Commissioner.

**T**HE Scripture casteth such a light of Divinity every way, its Purpose being the Mind of God, its Writing the Writting of Gods whole the Oracles of God, and every part of it the faithful Sayings of God, that it is hid to none as those that perish, whose eyes the God of this World hath blinded: So absurd a thing is *Atheism*, that even those who serve the Devil cannot want their God. At the Birth of *Jesw* there appeared a Star in the East, which guided the Wise-men (by their Presents seeming to have been Greatmen) to the place where the

was: But the Scripture, like the Sun, is the great Light that ruleth the day of the Gospel, circling the World as long as the Sun, and continuing while the Moon endureth. Rom: 10. 17. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God: But I say, have they not heard? yes verily, their sound went out into all the Earth, and their words unto the Worlds end.* In the Creation the first-born Light of the first day, lasting but three dayes concentred and ceased in the enduring Luminaries the product of the fourth day: So in the Regeneration, the light of Christs personal Preaching, lasting just as many Prophetical dayes, Dan. 9. 17. hath given place to the Scripture-light that endureth for ever, *and the sure word of Prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as to a Light that shineth in a dark place.* This is the Light that maketh all things manifest, even the thoughts and intents of the Heart, that discovereth all things to Men, and a Man to himself, both what he is, and what he ought to be: And *what manner of persons ought we to be?* 2 Pet. 1. 23, 24. Truly this Light is sweet, and intertaineth us, with variety of delightful Objects: Amongst which of late, happening to be detained with these last words of *Nehemiah*, and seeing them like a well done Portrait, in all stances looking towards me with an eye of instruction, walking and returning, and still more desireously beholding, hardly could I be satisfied with a sixth View.

*Remember me O my God for good.* Nehem. 13. last.

**T**HESE words at the very first view do clearly hold forth, That *There is a God.* And that both

## Good COMMISSIONER.

an exprefs Testimony of his blessed Name, that  
 heard in all the Scriptures, and seen in all his Works:  
*the Man of Wisdom shall see thy Name. Mic. 6. 9.* And  
 force of Reason, from the inclination and moti-  
 of the Soul, which finding nothing but emptinefs  
 home, goeth forth in quest of Happinefs, and but  
 sharpening its desires with all that is imperfect, is  
 isfied only with a perfect Good: And that is  
 od. So unhappy by necessity is every one that is  
 godly. The *Pythagorean* and *Hermetick* Method of  
 is the best Instructor of this Truth, which e-  
 ry Man may read off his own Soul. *Be still and know  
 as I am God.* How shall I know that? By my own  
 esires and Expectations, which can take up with  
 other thing. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and  
 Earth what desire I beside thee? And now Lord what  
 is I for? my hope is in thee.* If a raving Stoick, or  
 petulant Dialogist, shall say that these Soul-ardors  
 bur the intemperat extravagant heats of a work-  
 g Fancy quickned by the touch of a Platonick I-  
 a, rather to be starved to extinction than indul-  
 d to satisfaction: It is Answered seriously, *Thac  
 ficile est hominem exuere.* Or can any of them by an  
 ey of Fancy quiet an earning Stomack, or cure a  
 verish Body, let be (without quenching the Spirit  
 d starving the Soul) still otherwise than by Satis-  
 tion, and enjoyment of the desired Object, these  
 ul-longings and Desires, which are ever strong  
 d most eager in the greatest serenity? *Wish my Soul  
 e I desired thee in the night: by night upon my Bed,  
 ight him whom my Soul loved: And the Lord is in  
 ill voice.* To make good the Argument, let it  
 be

be added, That the Sageſt, Holyeſt, Nobleſt Soules are alwayes the hottelt in this purſuit, ſuch as *Job, Nehemiah, David*. Now after what is the King of *Israel* come out? after what doth he purſue? after a Flea? after a Fancy? or ſhould a wiſe Man enter vain knowledge, and (like *Simon Patricks Pilgrimage*) fill his Belly with the Eaſt-wind? Now ſhall a Man be ſo unmerciful to conclude all the World unavoidably miſerable, that they may be *Atheiſts* or ſhall they be ſo unwiſe, thus to be abuſed, to the hazarding even of a poſſibility of Happineſs? For if there be Happineſs, there is a God; and if there be no God, there can be no Happineſs. And then are all Men made in vain? If there be no Meaſure for what do we Hunger? if no Drink, what do we Thirſt for? if no Glory, (ſaith *Cicero*) for what do all Men labour? if no Reſt, why weary we our ſelves in vain? if no God, no Happineſs, what is this of Souls do ſo importunately purſue, with a ſerious loathing of all that is ſeen? or what hath wakened in them thoſe deſires that can never be ſtilled till they get what they ſeek. And what ſay theſe Soul-loſings, Thirſtings, Pantings, Breathings, but that thou beſt an *Atheiſt*, thou muſt put out the Soul, and put off the Man?

How ſeaſonable may this Reflection be in a World where *Atheiſm* is acted in ſo various Guiſes: by ſome with a Fools Heart in a Fools Coat, ſaying in their Heart, There is no God; by others in a Philoſophers Garment; for in the judgement of God, *The Wiſe by wiſdom knew not God*; by ſome in the dreaſ of a Hypocrite, *In words profeſſing to know God, but*

*The Character of a Good Commissioner.*

8

*Some deny him; By others in the person of An-  
nias thinking that God is altogether such a one  
as himself: By some in Epicurus his person, com-  
pleting God with the Kingdom of Heaven,  
and offering to relieve him of the abasing pen-  
sive and expensive charge of these his Low Countries,  
saying, He will neither do Good nor Evil; "But  
he is a God that judgeth in the Earth: By others  
in the Robs of Pharaoh the Egyptian Tyrant, brav-  
ing and defying God; Who is the Lord that I should  
obey him, or hearken to his voice? By some in the Pon-  
tificalls of Antichrist "With a Mouth speaking  
great things against the most High, boasting him-  
self that he is God, exalting himself above all that  
is called God, or is Worshiped: By others in the  
Equipage of a Souldier fighting against God with  
Wit and Power, Pen and Sword. But let such as  
Make War against the holy Covenant and Saints  
of the most High; that hate the Gospel, and him-  
self the Preaching thereof, take Gamaleels counsel,  
and beware "lest they be found even to fight  
against God: For there is neither Counsel nor  
Strength against the Lord; and who ever hard-  
ned himself against him and prospered?*

The Second View of these Words presents to us  
clearly, *The Immortality of the Soul.* This is estab-  
lished 1. Upon the same ground with the former:  
For if the Souls Happiness ly in the enjoyment of a  
perfect, and so necessarily an unchangeable Good,  
it must undeniably be Immortal, both to enjoy and  
praise its Object: *Et miserum est fuisse felicum:* There  
is no Happiness not perpetual, else he was a Fool

B

who

*The Character of a Good Commissioner.*

who spoiled his Mirth with the thoughts of a Sword hanging over his head. 2. It is confirmed clearly by the expectation of a future Reward: *Remember me O my God for good.* Till I see good Ropes twined of the Sand, and the Sea beaten to powder, I cannot be inclined to think that the World was made of Atoms. And if it be ruled by chance, what are Counsel and Art, Wisdom and Folly, Good and Evil, Law and Justice, but names of Fancies, large as ridiculous as he who should command the motion of the Sun to dance a Measure, or he who scourged the Sea for its disorder? We know that pure chance obtaineth impunity by the Law both of God and Man. Now this matter belongeth to the Ruler gravely to consider, how inconsistent Atheism is with Government: For to the Atheist Treason and Robbery is neither Plot nor Felony, but simple chance medley, a French Aire, or merry Jigg of Volage Atoms: But by this fortuitous Act of Indemnity, as the Atheist can do no wrong, so neither can he complain of injury, if he chance to be baffled, robbed, or dispatched violently. If the World reel (I cannot say properly be ruled) by chance, is not the Atheist, not by Scripture only which never speaks good of him, but by his own Principles also proven a forlorn Fool, lyable in all things to unavoidable surprisal? yea a liar also, who knowing and warned of a continual surprisal, can therefore never be surpris'd, except into the absurdity of a Self-contradiction, whereof his Principles of Fortuity are a fair Essay. But to a wise Man; If the World must be ruled by Counsel and Law; how is it that Justice is not in this life universally and fully executed, and every

Man



*The Character of a Good Commissioner.*

Man rewarded according to his Works? But that  
here is a Court of Referrals, *A day of the resurrection of  
all things ἀναστασις πάντων*, of righting all wrongs  
and settling all disorders. Rom. 2. 6. to 13. Some  
are rewarded in this life, to convince us of a Di-  
vine Providence; others are not rewarded, to warn  
us of a World to come. Or what can persuade *Nehemiah*  
with all the wisest and best of Men, deliberat-  
ing to chuse willingly to forgo the Worlds favour and  
pleasures, and undergo all its toil and displeasure, but  
an eye to the recompence of reward, by far more  
valuable than it is the later? The fence of the Souls  
Immortality is the indelible Character and solid  
rewards of Authentick Nature, exactly rendered in  
every Mans copy: Only it is not illuminated in some  
dark Hereticks and desperate Monsters, Saryres or  
such doleful Creatures in humane shape, where you  
see as little of the Man as of Immortality; for these  
all appear equally. Yet it is shadowed in all  
mens practice: For look we backward, What but  
the Aire of Immortality maketh Men so conceit an  
ancient Pedegree? Or foreward, What moveth  
men to call their Children and Lands by their own  
name, and to endeavour to perpetuate all together,  
at the expectation of Immortality? Say it is their  
vanity; yet *omne malum est in vano*, and there must  
be some reality under that same vanity. And true  
the Souls Immortality is the early dictat of Na-  
ture our Religious Mother. the uncontroverted  
and universal Sentiment of all her posterity of what-  
ever Religion *Jewish, Pagan, Christian, Mahometan*.  
The Sadducees might well be the first Dealers,

## *The Character of a Good Commissioner*

but Christ was not the first Deviser or Asserter of the Souls Immortality: Yea that with the different states of Rewards may be traced to furthest antiquity. A 3d. Argument in the words for the Souls Immortality is, the divine Comprehension of its Faculties and Acts, reaching in one present view things past and to come, and herein highly resembling the Eternity of the *Father of Spirits*, who in perfect present reaching from the Beginning to the End, ruleth all differences of times. Can the Soul be at the reverence of time, or subject to its consuming envy, which at one fetch can bring together times past and to come? Doth the Soul wax old and wear with the Body? Or, to the observation of any, doth it not often gain by the Bodily loss? For as the outward Man perisheth, the inward Man is renewed day by day. Or, as the Body wasteth with sickness and infirmity, shall the Soul dye of health and strength? Hath not the Atom-stower and dust of materiality blinded his eyes who cannot see the absurdity of such a fancy?

But yet the necessity of the Souls immortality may be seen more clearly in its excellent usefulness to Men. For 1. It directeth them in the choice, 1. Of things. Is the Soul immortal: Then seek we the Kingdom of God, the better part that cannot be taken from us, the Water of Life, the Meat that endureth to Life eternal, the hidden Manna, the enduring Substance, the Treasure in Heaven, the things that are not seen, which neither eye hath seen, nor the ear heard of, nor hath entered in the heart of Man to conceive.

*The Character of a Good Conscience.*

“ceive, what God hath laid up for those that love  
“him. Thou art my portion O Lord: and whom  
“have I in heaven but thee, or upon the earth what  
“is there that I desire beside thee? For all  
other things will fail me, yea and I will fail  
my self; “my heart and my flesh faileth; but  
“thou art the strength of my heart, and my por-  
tion for ever. 2. Of wayes: every way leads  
not to our choyce: “there is a Path the end where-  
“of is the way of Death: But thou wilt shew me  
“the Path of Life: and that lyes in the way of  
Gods Commandments: *I have chosen the way of  
thy Commandments.* Pl. 1. last, *The way of the  
ungodly shall perish,* and Psal. 2. last. *They shall  
perish from the way.* But Psal. 139, last, *There is a way  
everlasting;* and that Psal. 19. 9. *The fear of the  
Lord, is a clean way, a cleansing way, and endureth  
for ever.* Enter ye in at the strait gate &c. *It is the  
strait gate,* true; but it is the streight gate, the high  
way of the upright; It is the *Afflicted gate* *Mat. 7. 14.* *But it leadeth unto Life.* Let Pa-  
pists talk of Prosperity, and Sectaries boast of suc-  
cess and signal Providences, the afflicted way is  
Christ’s way. Therefore let no man be so simple as  
to say, if the Lord be with us, how have all these  
things befallen us? Moses the man of God, who  
was Honoured to be the Mediator of the old Testa-  
ment, and to guide Israel like a flock, was better ac-  
quainted with the way, who chose to suffer affliction  
with the People of God Heb. 11, 25. Indeed we should  
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, That they may pro-  
per that love her; Psal. 118, 25. *Save now I beseech thee,*

O Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee send now prosperity: Yet all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution, and through much Tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God. But let no man add affliction to the afflicted, and scornfully with Apostate Julian, alledge to Christians this Doctrine, to make their burdens heavier: God will not be mocked, but He will avenge his own Elect, who cry day and night to him, Though he bear long with them: I tell you that he will avenge them speedily, Luke 18. 7, 8. And men would remember, that there is Suffering for evil-doing, as well as for well-doing; and he who inflicts the one, may be rewarded with the other: For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the Wine is red, it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them, Psal. 75. 8. And it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance, &c. 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7, 8. 2. The belief of the Souls Immortality, teacheth men effectually the Fear of God: Fear not them that kill the Body, and when they have done that have no more, that they can do: But fear ye him who can cast both Soul and Body into Hell; I say fear him, Luke 12. 4, 5 Psal. 76. 11. He ought to be feared: And why? verse 12. He cutteth off the Spirits of Princes, he is terrible to the Kings of the Earth. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? For to thee doth it appertain, Jer. 10. 7. 3. It teacheth moderation in the desire and use of all things.

things worldly: "We look not at the things that  
"are seen, which are Temporal, but at the things  
"that are not seen, which are Eternal." There  
is indeed the high spirit of Christianity courting  
immortality with so great disdain of all Worldly  
things, that it cannot see them in its way. This  
is the true Nobility of the Soul that exempteth it  
from the Egyptian slavery and servile drudgery of load-  
ing us self with thick clay for the brick-kilns of worldly  
projects; and setteth it far without the reach of  
this Temptation, "And woe be to him who  
"buildeth his House by Blood, and his City by  
"Oppression; and delivereth it from the snare of  
him, "Who will be Rich, till He be perished  
"with many Sorrows and drowned in Destruc-  
"tion. But, this I say Brethren, the time is short;  
even short enough to him who every Evening  
may hear, "This night thy Soul shall be taken  
"from thee: It remaineth, That they who pos-  
"sess the World be as they possessed it not, they  
"that use it, as if they used it not, and as not ab-  
"solving it; for the fashion of this World passeth a-  
"way, 1 Cor. 7. 29. and foreward. But alas for  
pity that this same Moderation and Indifferency  
should be both practised and applauded in the mat-  
ters of God! And that it is so rare to be Seriously  
and positively Holy, that Godliness may say, "O  
"ye Sons of Men, how long will ye turn my  
"Glory into Shame? How long will ye love Va-  
"nity, and seek after Leasing? Psal. 4. 2, 4. It  
teacheth us the best managry. This Age hath  
learned to be wonderful Thrifty: But O that they

should study to be rich toward God! And could be  
 persuaded that Aims and Charity is the best Hus-  
 bandry, and surest Art of Managry; and would  
 learn of the *Unjust Steward*, "To make to them-  
 selves Friends of the unrighteous *Mammon*, that  
 when they fail, they may receive them into ever-  
 lasting habitations: *Mat. 6. 19, 20* Lay not up for  
 yourselves Treasures upon earth &c. But lay up  
 for yourselves Treasures in Heaven. The men  
 of the World have their portion in this life  
 But as for me when I awake, I shall be satisfied  
 with thy likeness *Psal. 17. 14, 15*. Alas! most men  
 have so little desire for Heaven, that next to  
 come to have as little hope of it, and so at last  
 gain to take up with the World, and for such a  
 blessing, must with *Esau*, be content with the  
 curse of the earth. *Gen. 27, 39*. Or else what men  
 the unhandsome, unhallowed, and unhappy Prac-  
 tices of catching, gripping, and inhaucing, which  
 have prevailed so far that now mens Covetousness  
 hath strengthened it self with Pride, lest they should  
 be reputed less witty: for how do they boast of  
 such exploits? But such boasting is not good, and the  
 glory is their shame, for they mind earthly things *Phil.*  
*3, 19*. And they have hearts exercised with covetous  
 Practices, cursed Children 2 *Pet. 2. 14*. But alas! I find  
 one great fault in most mens accounts, that they  
 never count upon the Soul; They count their thou-  
 sands, and ten thousands, and hundred thousands  
 and the Poor soul sayes, how many count you me  
 I stand Debter for ten thousand Talents upon your  
 score; Yea, I am already distressed, and what  
 will

will you give in exchange for me? Not a great, says the wretch, while I have life, though after that he would give ten thousand Worlds; So much there is betwixt market-dayes. 5. It teacheth patience in well doing; to them "who by patience in well doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and immortality, is eternal life; Rom; 2, 7. Therefore my beloved Brethren be ye stedfast, unmovable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord 1 Cor; 15. last. And this is the Conclusion of the Apostles vindication of the Resurrection and the life to come. The Saints have a long and sore service in the World, But God is not unrighteous to forget their labour of love. a cup of cold water shall not be forgotten: And for whatsoever any have forsaken, they shall have "a hundred fold in this life, and in the World to come life everlasting: And we reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in the Saints. Therefore let us not be weary in well doing, for in due Season we shall reap, if we faint not Galat. 6. 9. 6. It supporteth the Christians hope: For if in this life only we have hope in Christ, of all men we are most miserable 1 Cor. 15, 19. It is certainly the interest of every good man to believe the Souls immortality, and as much their Duty to live so as it may be their interest: for it is not Reason and Judgment that prompt men to deny it, but fear and an evil Conscience that tells them it will be ill for

for them. The Souls immortality is the hope of *Israel*, that maketh them diligent in well doing, patient in Tribulation, and desirous of their change: "for we that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burdened not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life 2 Cor. 5. 4.

The 7th view of these words giveth this manifest Reflection, That *Communion with God is the Souls Sanctuary and Salace*. We have this Prayer of *Nehemiah* thrice Recorded in this Chap. and in the close of the 5, Chap. besides frequent Addresses of the like nature, such as that solemn Ejaculation Chap. 2. 4. And that Chap. 6. 14. and another in this same Chap. ver. 29. Besides his ordinary attendance on publick worship, and Solemn and extraordinary Fasting Chap. 9. By all which it is evident how Seriously and constantly Godly this renouncer worthy was. Like *David* who could say, *what time soever I awake I am with thee*: And truly the Soul is either sleeping or worse when not with God. Affairs and weight of Business quickned their Devotion as much as it extinguisheth ours: And the matter is, they were not cool, indifferent Latitudinarians in Religion, but men of another Spirit, serious Men. And if that be true which Philosophers have said, that that is not the Man which is seen; Alas what Puppies, what Mock-men are we, who can be any thing but Good and Serious? This Observation (proven by the experience of Saints in all Generations, *Who sat down under the shadow of the Almighty with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to them* b



the *same* *Can* 2.3. will make it self good by the strongest  
 reasons, when we have seen a little what Commu-  
 nion with God is, and wherein it consists.  
 And 1. It stands in Reconciliation, the imme-  
 diate result of Justification by faith: *Amos* 3. 3.  
 Can two walk together except they be agreed?  
*Rom.* 5. 1. "Being justified by faith we have peace  
 with God, and 10. v. We are reconciled by the  
 death of his Son. This giveth access to God,  
 and bringeth us near who *sometimes were far off*:  
 This of *Enemies* maketh *Friends*; even as *Abraham*  
 was obliged, and was called *the Friend of God*. 2. In a  
 mystical, spiritual and Supernatural Union, the pro-  
 duct of Regeneration; for "he that is joyned to the  
 Lord is one Spirit, and is made partaker of the  
 divine Nature. This maketh us Sons; and plant-  
 eth us in God *John* 1. 12, 13. "To as many as re-  
 ceived him, to them gave he power to become  
 the sons of God: which were born, not of blood,  
 nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of  
 man, but of God. 1 *John* 4. 13. Hereby we  
 know that we dwell in him, and he in us, be-  
 cause he hath given us of his spirit: and v. 16.  
 God is love, and he that loveth dwelleth in God,  
 and God in him. *John* 17. 23. I in them, and  
 thou in me, that they may be made perfect in  
 one. *John* 15. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches.  
 In likeness of natures, compliance of minds,  
 and conformity of manners. 2 *Cor.* 3. last, he that  
 hath Communion with God is changed into the same  
 image: and *Colos.* 3. 10. is renewed after the image  
 of him that created him. 1 *Cor.* 15. 49. As we have  
 been

born the image of the earthy: so must we also of the heavenly. Christ is the image of his Father, and Saints are the image of Christ. And how much are they of one Humour, pleased in and pleasing one another. The Lord is a God to the Saints mind: in Heaven or earth he sees nothing to him: "whom have I in heaven but thee? Or who is a God like unto thee? *Nec vires quidquam simile aut secundum* And the Saint is a David, "a man to Gods heart. What is the book of Canticles but one continued proof of this matter? What exchange of hearts are there? What centering of Affections? What returns of Love? What uniting Raptures? What reflections of Beauty? What Echo's of Invitations and Commendations with such likeness of voices that sometimes you shall hardly discern who speaks. Moreover we find this compliance universal in the Saint, swaying all that was in him to the Lords Devotion: "his understanding is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him: he understands with God, from God, and for God: *He can do nothing against the truth but for the truth*: He lighteth his Torch at the Sun and taketh his light from the Candlestick of the Sanctuary, the Law and the Testimony: his faith hath the image of Christ James 2. 1. "It is the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory; And Christs Supercription Revel. 3. "These things sayeth the Amen, the faithful and true witness: And, we have the mind of Christ Conformably his will is swayed, whether for acting Lord what wilt thou have me to do? or for suffering

Not my will but thy will be done: he is an Orthodox  
 Monotheist. And for his affections, he loveth and  
 hateth as God doth, and because he doth it. And  
 finally, in his conversation, "he is Holy as God is  
 Holy, merciful as he is mercifull, and perfect as  
 his heavenly Father is perfect. Hence the old  
 Philosophers seeing thorow the darkness of nature  
 have said, "That good men are visible mortal  
 Gods, and the Gods are invisible, immortal men;  
 Which as it is litterally true of their fictitious fan-  
 cied Gods; so with respect to the true God, it  
 proveth Symbolically that the mystery of the  
 Incarnation is no absurdity; there being such a  
 high affinity betwixt the Divine and Humane na-  
 ture in its integrity; for we are also his off-spring  
 as we are in *Acts 17. 28.* 4 In mutual claim  
 and interest in the Persons and things of one  
 another; the result of mutual choice, gift, and  
 Covenant contract: "My beloved is mine and  
 I am his: I will be their God and they shall  
 be my People: All that is in God is God, and all  
 that is in God is for his People; *he is a God to Israel.*  
 All that his People are, or have, or can, is for him  
*1 Cor. 6. 19. 20.* "ye are not your own; for ye  
 are bought with a price; Therefore glorify  
 God in your body, and in your spirit which  
 are Gods. And none of us liveth to himself, nei-  
 ther doth any of us dy unto himself, but whe-  
 ther we live we are the Lords, or whether we dy  
 we are the Lords. And our Communion with  
 God consisteth much in holding up a Trade, and  
 keeping a bank with God in getting from him and  
 be-

bestowing for him : and though a man cannot profit God, nor reapeth he where he sowed not, yet he must have his own with the use. Hath a man communion with God ; What hath he done ? what hath he given ? or what hath he forsaken that he had, or refused that he might have had, for God ? *Numb. 24. 11.* Balak could say to Balaam, *Lo the Lord hath kept thee back from honour* : but we may say to some, The Lord hath not kept thee back from Honour : for like the Apostate Jews “ they “ love the praise of men better than God or the “ praise of God ; But *Moses* refused to be called the “ son of Pharaohs daughter, esteeming the reproach “ of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt *Heb. 11. 24, 26.* The Apostles forsook all and followed Christ : A good bargain, ( a thing much prized by the spirits of our time ) “ a hundred fold “ in this present life, and in the World to come “ life everlasting. A man may forsake all for God, but he can lose nothing for God. Take *Galeacius Caracciolus* for a sufficient witness, who proved the matter : *Italy* the Garden of the World, *Naples* of *Italy*, *Vicini* of *Naples*, farewell all for Christ freely. But now if the son of man should come, shall he find faith in the earth ? Who believeth indeed, that “ He who spared not his own son “ will with him give us all things freely ? Are the “ consolations of God small with thee ? Thinkest thou so meanly of God, and Christ the gift of God, all the fulness of God, the treasures of hope, the earnest of the Spirit, the Riches of faith, the first fruits of the inheritance ? Didst thou ever sing *Psal.*

7. "Thou hast put more gladness in my heart than in the time that their corn and their wine increased? All these things have I given thee, and yet I will do more for thee, if thou canst outforgoe a little for me; Poor Soul mayst thou spare it? 5. In fellowship of converse; And therefore in Scripture its called "a walking with God, before God, in Christ; a dwelling in his presence, and walking in the light of his countenance. *Psal. 73, 23.* I am continually with thee. *Psal. 139, 18.* When I awake I am still with thee. *2 Cor. 16, 16.* I will dwell in them and walk in them *Rev. 21, 3.* And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Men live together for mutual comfort and help of life: "his comforts delight the soul, and he is the God of our life. Men converse together for Counsel; *counsel is mine,* sayeth the wonderful Counsellor, and he giveth his People Counsel; and therefore the godly Souls desire is to enquire in his temple: Men converse together for business, and O how much hath the Soul to do with God! *Who doth all things* *for us*: Men pay visits to one another; and what kind visits pass betwixt God and his People? Men fast and sup together; "I will sup with him and he with me *Rev. 3, 20.* *Prov. 9, 2.* "Wisdom hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her Table. *Psal. 23, 5.* Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of  
"mine

mine Enemies. *Iſa.* 25. 6. A feast of fat things,  
 a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of  
 Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined, *Can.*  
 4. last. and 5. 1. "Let my beloved come into his  
 garden and eat his pleasant Fruits: I am come  
 into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse, &c. *Ecc.*  
 O Friend, Drink, yea Drink abundantly O  
 Beloved. Friends Converse in Presence, and Cor-  
 respond in Absence and at a distance: The  
 Godly Soul cannot endure Absence or Distance  
 from God; for the Light of his Countenance is  
 better than Life: But if it fall at distance, it keeps  
 up a correspondence; "In my trouble, I sought  
 the Lord, and my cry came before him; even  
 into his Ears. O ye Daughters of *Jerusalem*,  
 you see him whom my Soul loveth, tell him  
 I am Sick of Love. When my heart was over-  
 whelmed within me, thou knewest my way  
 From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee  
 O when shall I come and appear before God  
 Now for a reason of the observation, pray consider  
 where should a man be, but with his Friend  
 Where should the Soul be, but where it Subsists  
 Lives, Loves, Thrives and does well? Where  
 should a man be but at home where he dwelleth  
 And where should a branch be but in the Vine  
 Where should Love be but with its Beloved? Where  
 a like but with its like? Where should a man  
 but where he hath Comfort, liking, and being like  
 Where should a man be but with his Interest?  
 Receiver but with a Giver? Or a Servant Entru-  
 sted but about his Masters Business? Where should

Courteour be but with his Prince? a man but  
with his Counsellor? a person invited but at  
the feast? and one visited but waiting upon his  
friend?

But how sad is it that men should so far sleight  
as to forfeit, and so justly forfeit as to sleight  
Communion with God? What lamentations may  
thereon be written? or what shall be taken to  
witness for this? Jer: 2, 10, 11, 12, 13. Hath  
any of the nations done such a thing as this  
to forsake their Gods, which yet are no Gods?  
but my People hath forsaken me for a thing that  
cannot profit. And will a man forsake the snow  
of Lebanon for the water of the brook? But if  
yet there be hope, let men be exhorted to consider  
their ways, by all the serious names of interest,  
profession, the love of their espousals, the memo-  
ry of their serious hours, the testimony of their ex-  
periences, their appalling fears, their silent silenc-  
ing and silenced convictions, their unquench-  
ed fires, and speaking disappointments giving them  
darkness for light, a scorpion for an egg, a stone  
for bread, a lie for truth, a cloud for sun: And  
finally by the misery of their despoiled Soules: For  
what is the Soul destitute of God? An exile, wan-  
tering, wearyed, weighted, wounded, naked, re-  
pined, starved, appaled, sleighted, hopeless, help-  
less, a broken soul, a lost soul? Psal: 142, 4, 5. "Re-  
fuge failed me, no man cared for my soul: I  
cried unto thee. O Lord, I said, thou art my re-  
fuge and my portion in the Land of the living.  
This is the rest wherewith they may ease the  
weary

"weary to rest: in returning and rest shall men  
 "be saved, in quietness and confidence they shall  
 "be established. Return unto thy rest O my soul.

The 4<sup>th</sup> view of this exquisite piece gives us  
*The Pattern of a Good Ruler.* For being the Epilogue  
 and close of the book, it hath a natural and due rela-  
 tion to what goeth before; and bearing the answer  
 of a good conscience, casteth a freight reflection  
 on the life and acts of the man; and being a suit  
 for reward, hath a necessary respect to the work  
 which also is expressed Chap. 5, 19. "Think upon  
 "me O my God for good, according to all that  
 "I have done for this People: and in this same  
 "Chap. 14. ver, remember me O my God concern-  
 "ing this, and wipe not out my good deeds that  
 "I have done for the house of my God: and ver. 2  
 "remember me O my God concerning this also  
 "and spare me according to the greatness of thy  
 "mercy, Many Rulers have done worthily, some  
 excelling in one thing, some in another; yet scarce  
 Histories sacred and common, you shall not  
 easily find in one man so many excellent parts  
 nor so compleat a living, practical pattern of  
 good Ruler. The Ruler would do himself a favour  
 and God, & his People a great good service, to pre-  
 serve the Authentick of this book in his heart, and  
 copy it exactly in his life and Government. He  
 is a great Kings high Commissioner: and all things  
 in such a person being so great, that his sins can  
 not be small, his care had need be so much the  
 greater, and he would look to his copy the often  
 Behold then and consider, and you see him, in



the Sun in the Zodiack, perfecting his course through all the signes of a ruling Luminary.

1. He is zealously and eminently Godly, a burning and shining light, breathing at once a living compend of faith and obedience, Law and Gospel. For, faith laying hold on Gods Covenant, and obedience to the first and great Commandment of love, which is the fulfilling of the Law, are both angled and pointed in this one word *My God*: a man much in meditation, given to Prayer, Duties of so strict affinity, that in Scripture the one passeth for the other: a man, the multitude and weight of whose employments awakeneth and quickeneth his devotion: such a riddle is Religion that out of the Eater it can bring meat, and sweet out of the strong; but he that would unfold it must plow with *Samsons* heifer and be truly Godly. Lo every act of the Governour shut up with Prayer. In the discharge of his employment and exercise of his Government, he looks to God for direction, for *he did all things as was found written in the Law*; for help in his address to the King, *he Prayed to the God of Heaven*; for his reward, *remember me O my God for good*. And therefore he was neither partial nor indifferent in the Law, but zealously he pursued good, and persecuted evil, and that in all whatsoever: neither is his Religion recluse, in the large as cold as calm, and full as dark as cold shadows of fruitless, idle, lifeless, cowardly contemplation, but goeth abroad into free, generous, zealous, and Heroick acting, retaining the height of spirituality in the midst of secularity, resembling therein the Archetype Ruler,

who in most perfect rest Ruleth all things, and moveth all, himself unmoved. It is below the Godly Ruler to be swayed and abused either by his own Lust and interest, or example of others: *Chap: 5. 14, 15.* " / and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the Governour: but the former Governours that had been before me were chargeable to the People, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside fourty shekels of silver, yea even their servants bare Rule over the People: but so did not I, because of the fear of God. The fear of God is the Star that guides the good Ruler *2 Sam. 23, 3.* " He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. If Religious pretences be made helps to policy, how much better must be it self in reality? And let politick preachers beware of their fate and folly who taught others to be Captains to their own ruine, that they teach not others to be Politicians to the expence of the teacher, when he is served with his own measure. Yet as to shun the baseness of Hypocrisy a man needs not run to the wickedness of avowed profanity, so can he not pass from the one to the other but over the fair neck of Christianity, with greater insolency of impiety then the outrageously barbarous *Tahiti* drove her chariot over the belly of her Murdered Father. *Levi. Lib. 1.*

2. The good Ruler is a " Reformer, a repairer of breaches, a restorer of paths to dwell in: and it is but a faint encouragement and a desperat complement to a good Ruler *Isay 3, 6.* " Be thou our Ruler, and let this ruine be under thy hand

Nor can he love to have it recorded, that in his dayes such evils prevailed unreformed: it was "when there was no King in Israel that every man did what was right in his own eyes. If the health of the People be not recovered, it sayeth there is no Physician there *Jer. 8, 22*. But a good Ruler scattereth the wicked and bringeth the wheel over them; and he may say with *David Psal. 75, 3*. "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it: he is *ἡσυχίαι, βασις τῷ λαῷ* name and thing, a *Joseph the Son of Israel*. Such a one was *Moses* the Law-giver, such was *Josua* his successor, such were the *Judges of Israel*, such was *Samuel*, such were all the good Kings of *Judah*, such was *Ezra* the Scribe, and such was *Nehemiah* the *Turshatha*, an eminent Reformer of Religion and State, of Church and Kingdom. For Religion: in general, Gods Holy Commandments were broken by all ranks of persons; prophanity and iniquity prevailed and abounded, that is solemnly confessed and amended *Chapters 1. & 9*. In particular, oppression reigned, that is quashed *Chap: 5*. and the People relieved: false Prophets were hired by the enemy, and bribed to compliance to weaken the Rulers hands and hinder the work of Reformation, they are discovered and marked *Chap: 6*. The ordinary worship of God, and his Solemn Feasts were disused, these are restored *ib: 8*. For advancing and establishing the whole Reformation a Solemn Fast is kept *ib: 9*. and a Covenant subscribed *ib. 10*. The Holy Seed had mingled themselves and matched with strangers,

People of heathen abominations; they separate themselves, and that is amended *chap. 12*. The offerings of the Lord were neglected, these are renewed *chap. 12*. The Sabbaths were horribly prophaned, That is strictly and with certification discharged, and they not suffered to lodge about the walls *Chap. 12. 31. and 13. 15.* and foreward. The service of God was neglected by non-residence of the Priests through calamity and want, that also is helped *Chap. 10, 11, 12, 13. ver. 10.* The orders and services of the Priests and Levites were confused, these are cleared, and they set to their charges as appointed by David *Chap. 7. 63, 12. 45. and 13. 30*. Strangers uncircumcised had entred and defiled the Congregation of the Lord, these are removed *chap. 13. 3.* Profane Persons of the Princes of the heathen had lodgings in the Lords house, they are expelled and the Chambers cleansed *Chap. 13. 8, 9*. Some of the chief of the Priests had defiled the Covenant of the Priesthood by strange wives, they are branded, and that also is amended. For the State of the city the place of their Fathers sepulchres lay in waste, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire: First these are repaired. The people and their work are strongly opposed and sore reproached, they are vindicated and their hands strengthened *Chap. 2, 4*. When the City is built it is not manned, therefore inhabitants and defendants are appointed *Chap. 11*. The People suffer sore by mortgage, the great sin of the oppressors belonging to the former head, and calamity of the oppressed pertaining to this part; that is redressed *Chap. 5*. Open

and

and secret enemies correspond and plot against the  
work and the Ruler, these are discovered and dis-  
covered *Chap. 6.* They are in great reproach  
and distress; God is sought and means are used  
*Chap. 4 and 6.* They are poor; husbandry and  
traffick is practised, only the Sabbaths work and  
markets are discharged; Oppression is born down,  
and the People relieved of publick burdens; *Na-*  
*hemiah* the Governour and his brethren neither ex-  
acted the bread of the Governour, nor bought  
land, nor refused to work as others. O for such  
Rulers to a nation scattered and peeled, a nation  
perverted out and troden down, whose land is spoiled?  
*Jay 18, 2.* Our Rulers, if they had a mind, have  
fair occasion for *J. b.* Gloriation *Chap. 29. 13.*  
The blessing of him that was ready to perish came  
upon me &c. In this time are great decayes, de-  
volutions, abuses, and unsufferable corruptions; let  
it not be thought an Error proceeding from the  
Ruler. And here People would be warned to en-  
courage and comply with Reforming Rulers,  
not, as they were in *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* times,  
inveterate, incurable and obstinate in their cor-  
ruptions, lest they hear that, *Hos. 10. 3, 4.* "A  
King can do them no good, because they feared  
not the Lord, and spake words swearing falsely  
in making a Covenant. But this pertaineth to  
the Ruler, " That whatsoever is commanded by  
the God of Heaven, be diligently done for the  
house of the God of Heaven, lest there be wrath  
against the realm of the King and his Sons *Ex. 27-*  
*33.* And that Judgment run like a river, and righ-  
teousness

"tearfulness like a mighty stream: That he take his pattern from the type and Antitype, who also is the Archetype Ruler *Psal. 72.* So shall there be abundance of peace; and also in *Judah* things shall go well.

3. The good Ruler hath a natural, Fatherly and tender care of the People. Thus its said *Isa. 49. 23.* *Kings shall be nursing Fathers.* And in *Israel* they were wont to mourn for good Rulers with this expression, *as my brother Jer: 21, 18.* Yea he is the breath of our nostrils, *Lament. 4. 20.* by whom in the publick body "we lead a quiet life and "peaceable in all Godliness and honesty *1 Tim. 2. 2.* He is *pater patriæ & parens Reip.* Nor can I see what should have moved those dissembling Emperours, who in semblance refused the title of Lord, to make so nice of the endearing name of *Father of the Countrey*, but simply the conscience that they did as little deserve the name as they designed the thing. But surely, as a Rich man will never want an heir, a good Ruler can never want Children; nor needs he fear *Coniachs* fate, *Write ye this man Childless:* for if he have the heart of a Father, he shall have the name, *tho' it is better than sons and daughters.* We find not that *Nehemiah* was married, yet his name flourisheth in the records of his eminent services, more than if his line had continued uninterrupted to this day. "The righteous shall be had "in everlasting remembrance. Four things are proper to the care of a Father: Affection, Instruction, Correction, and Provision: all which are evident in *Nehemiah* the Governour. Great is his Affection *Chap. 1, 3, 4.* And how Sadly taketh he on for the

reproach and affliction of his brethren? " He sat  
 " down and wept and mourned certain dayes, and  
 " fasted and Prayed before the God of Heaven. He  
 cannot digest their grief Chap: 8. 9. 10. When the  
 People Weept, he said, " Go your way, eat the  
 " fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to  
 " them for whom nothing is prepared, for this  
 " day is holy, neither be ye sad for the joy of the  
 " Lord is your strength. For *Instruction*, he causeth  
 the Priests read to them the book of the Law of  
 Moses; " So they read in the book, in the Law  
 " of God distinctly. and gave the sense, and caus-  
 " ed them to understand the reading *ibid.* 8, ver.  
 Nor is he wanting in *correction* chap. 5. 7. " I re-  
 " buked the Nobles and the Rulers; and chap. 13.  
 " 15. I contended with them, and cursed them,  
 " and smote certain of them, and pluckt off their hair:  
 and in the 11, v. *ibid.* " I contended with the Ru-  
 lers; and in the 17. v, again, " I contended with  
 " the Nobles of Judah; and 21, v. then I testified  
 " against them, and said unto them, why lodge  
 " ye about the wall? If ye do so again I will lay  
 " hands on you. And in the matter of *Provision*,  
 he was of the mind of the Apostle, " That Chil-  
 " dren ought not to lay up for their Parents, but  
 " the Parents for the Children; he will not be  
 " chargeable to the People, nor take the bread of  
 " the Governour, nor buy Land; but keeps a  
 large Table " for a hundred and fifty of the Jews  
 " and Rulers, beside strangers. And that no man  
 may think this was a frolick, or an ambitious, sin-  
 gular, popular humour, v, 15. he asserteth ex-  
 pressly

pressly. "that this he did, because of the fear of God; and resolven it into this reason; that he would not be chargeable to the People: And thus I take the account of the matter, That to be chargeable to a poor exhausted People consisteth not with the fear of God, nor with the fatherly heart of a good Ruler. In fine, the Ruler should remember, that Subjection first founded in a Son is ultimately refounded in the Commandment, *Honour thy Father.*

4. The good Ruler is a person well informed and thoroughly acquainted with the condition of his People. Such was *Nehemiah*. And first, Some things fall under his own eye and observation: such as the prophanation of the Sabbath, and the marriages with strangers, in this same *Chap. I* (sayes he) &c. A Ruler can be nought the less a Judge that he is a Witness. *Matth. 26. 65.* What further need have we of Witnesses? behold now *ye have heard*, was proof sufficient, if the enditement had been relevant. It were good in the first place, that Rulers would suppress the enormities whereof themselves are Witnesses. Histories tell us of many famous Persons, who would go through their dominions *incognito* or in disguise, to get information. Our *James* the fifth is known to have been much of this humour; and a pitty it is, that his methods and prattiques of information were not committed to more clear and faithful records than dark and slippery tradition. *Chap; 2, 12.* *Nehemiah* goeth out by night to view the wall. There are ancient Hieroglyphicks, which painted Rulers blind,



blind, may here come under correction; for he that hath not eyes and ears of his own can neither see nor hear with another mans, as is commonly said to be the case of Rulers. Other things the *Turshasha* understands by information of others: And here the good Ruler will seek information *Chap. 1. 2. ver.* And this proceeds from his foresaid affection; or otherways he rejects not information, and that either by complaint, as in the case of the mortgage *5 chap.* Or simple historical relation, as the condition of *Jerusalem* and the people *Chap. 1. 2, 3.* and the fault of *Eliashub* in giving *Tobiah* a chamber in the house of the Lord *chap. 13. 7.* And the withholding of the Priests portion *ver. 10.* It is the part of all good Subjects, in their several stations, to give, and the part of the good Ruler to seek and take information of evils and disorders in the Peoples condition or manners. Princes should have long ears. *Pharaohs* Princes said, *knowest thou not that Egypt is destroyed? If he knew not, they could tell him it.* But sometimes *know not* is one thing with *care not*, and then comes the question of the disciples, "master carest thou not that we perish?" and *Prov. 24. 12.* would be remembered: "if thou sayest, behold, we knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" Foreign intelligence is necessary of the counsels and motions of enemies: and *Nehemiah* is not wanting in that either; yet take it apart from homeward information and acquaintance with our

our own condition, it is but *foris sapere*, and none of the greatest wisdom: for what is the difference betwixt a man out of his wits, and him whose wits are without him? What can a Judge say to a cause, or a Physician to a disease without information? And what can a Ruler do for a People unless he be thoroughly acquainted with their condition?

5. The good Ruler is a homely, condescending, conversible, and accessible person. This necessarily maketh way for the former in practise, and followeth from it in reason. *Chap. 1. 2. Hanani* and the men of *Judah* got access to and audience of *Nehemiah. chap. 4. 22.* he talketh with the People yea he hears the complaints of the People and their wives that were oppressed *chap. 5. 1. to 6.* And *chap. 7. 5.* God puts it in his heart to gather the Nobles and the Rulers, and the People. *chap. 4. 14. and 8, 9.* he encourageth and comforteth the People, and *speaketh to them &c. chap. 13, 7.* When he came to *Jerusalem* he understood what there was done: and how but by converse? els might he as well have understood elsewhere. Yea v. 15, he condescends to be a personal reprovcr of those of the people whom he saw profaneing the Sabbath; and likewise of the merchants v. 21. and of these v. 25. who had transgressed by strange marriages. Nor is all this popularity, but real duty, which obligeth Rulers by many commands in Scripture, to hearken the complaint and hear the cause of the poor and needy. Hence *Isaies* complaint 59, 14. "that Judgement is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off."

"that"

that truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; it can have no access to, nor hearing before the Ruler. An unaccessible Ruler is a Luminary eclipsed: The intercepting of the sovereign's beams from shedding their benigne influence upon the Subjects and precluding the Subject from access to receive them, are by so far more fatal than the most dismal eclipses; these but conjecturally and contingently portend, these necessarily and effectually produce and unavoidably infer the fall of a Ruler; and really undo the Prince whatever they pretend for the person, and leave him, like a defeated Trojan with his royal blood to shift for a Kingdom, beside the wrong done to the People. If any should invert the decree *Dan.* 6, 7. and establish it with this alteration, that any man may freely ask petitions of any God or man, save of the King, it would be large as unpolitick as the other is ungodly. In such case *Elsbers* resolution must carry it: "Behold I goe in to the King, which is not according to Law, and if I perish I perish. A recluse Prince is so absurd and inconsistent, that *Charles the fifth* disposed his Crowns before he took himself to the Cloister: Nor should ought but despair make a Monk of a Ruler. I understand not the mystery of *Pygmalion*, how a man can see unseen; nor what but miserable vanity can move some great Princes of the East to shut themselves up in Canopies; but all the World knows what all the World thinks of *Achilles* with his distaff, and *Sardanapalus* in his Gynaeceum and *Tiberius* in his retreat at *Capreae*. But he that ruleth over men must be Just, ruling

ing in the fear of God; and is as the light of the morning when the Sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. 2 Sam. 23. 4. His countenance and influence must reach, to visit and refresh the lowest of his People. That homely and accessible Prince *James the fifth*, called *The Carl's King of Scotland*, really was, and was reputed the bravest Prince in his time.

6. If he be a *Nehemiah*, a Commissioner deputed by a sovereign Ruler, he must be, as diligent to get, so faithful to give true and full information of the Peoples condition to his Master, and effectually to interpose for his help, and to enlarge the indulgence of his Royal Concessions to the outmost. Thus *Nehemiah* told the King all that was told him of *Jerusalem* and his People chap. 2, 3. and then in sadness: and sought a commission for help and reparation v. 5. and forward; which he shewed to the Governours beyond the river v. 9. And was executed to the full extent throughout the whole Book. In the 4 and 5 v. of the 2 chap. His request and the Kings grant was only that he might build *Jerusalem*: and we see in the progress of the work, and sequele of the History, how amply he prosecutes that Commission to the largest extent of its virtual comprehension: for he not only builds but beautifies, not only beautifies, but fortifies, not only repaires but reforms *Jerusalem*, and yet exceedeth not his commission: for when all this is done *Jerusalem* is but *Jerusalem*, beautiful for situation: a city that is compact together; whether in the

tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony  
 of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord: for  
 here are set throns of judgements, the throns of the house  
 of David Psal 48, 2. and 122, 3. 4. 5. And David  
 by a figure understood no less in his serious petiti-  
 on Psal; 51, 18. *Do good in thy good Pleasure unto*  
*Jerusalem: build thou the walls of Jerusalem;* where one  
 wall helpeth to clear another; to build her walls  
 figuratively, to do her good properly; and to  
 put to her good in propriety, is in the figure to build  
 her walls; and Psal. 122, 7 He calleth it more  
 expressly *peace and prosperity.* The Ruler that is  
 thus minded may resolve with *Nehemiah*, to meet  
 with scorn, calumny, opposition, and, which is  
 extraordinary, malicious challenges of sedition, and  
 accusations of rebellion; but affection to the work,  
 adherence to his Commission, the gallantry of his  
 person, Prayer to and confidence in the God of  
 Heaven bear him out against and over all these:  
*chap. 2. 20.* "I said unto them, The God of  
 heaven he will prosper us, therefore we his ser-  
 vants will rise and build; *chap. 6, 9.* Now there-  
 fore O God strengthen my hands; and 11, v. I  
 said, should such a man as I flee? and who is  
 there that being as I am would go into the tem-  
 ple to save his life? I will not go in. How chief-  
 ly necessary is this good part in a deputed Ruler,  
 where the nation to their great loss wants the de-  
 sirable influence of their Gracious Princes pre-  
 sence?

7. The good Ruler is Governed by Justice and  
 the Law of God, in the whole exercise of his Go-

verment 2 Sam. 22. 3. *He must be just.* Before  
 there were Kings in *Israel*, it was appointed *Deut.*  
 17. 18, 19. *That the King should have a copy of the*  
*law which he should read, and keep, and do, every*  
*all the words and statutes.* This was David's study  
*Psal.* 119 throughout. This was the care of the  
 good reforming Kings of *Judah*, chiefly *Hzekiah*  
 and *Josiah*; this was the practise of *Ezra* the scribe,  
 and *Nehemiah* the *Tushtaba*. According to the law  
 he hates and refrains from oppression himself, and  
 refrains it in others: According to the law he or-  
 ders the Genealogies of the Priests, and appoints  
 their offices and portions: According to the Law  
 he restores the ordinary and extraordinary public  
 worship, and Solemn Feasts. According to the  
 Law he reforms the abuse of marriage with stran-  
 gers. According to the Law, and practise of  
 good Rulers in former times, he subscribes a Co-  
 venant for Reformation. According to the Law he  
 sanctifies the Temple, and cleanses it from the  
 abomination of heathen usurpation, and profanation  
 of strangers. According to the Law, he dis-  
 chargeth the profanation, and enjoyneth strictly the  
 sanctification of the Sabbath. This is that which  
 maketh the difference betwixt a good Ruler and a  
 Tyrant. But every measure is not the standard,  
 and humane Laws have too much of the man to  
 be perfect, and not so much of the *Pope* as to be in-  
 fallible. Other Laws are but *Ruled Rules*; but  
 the Law of God is the *Ruling pattern* *Psal.* 20, 7.  
*The Law of the Lord is perfect, and his testimony is*  
*sure.* In a time of Restitution, even Laws may  
 suffice

for a Reformation : That which hath been may  
 be ; and a Rescissory Act is not impossible. But  
 the decree must stand immovable Exa  
 2. " Whatsoever is commanded by the God  
 of Heaven, let it be diligently done for the house  
 of the God Heaven : With this injunction, lest  
 there be wrath. Moses was faithful in all the  
 house of God, as a servant, but Jesus Christ  
 is a son ; and the Isles shall wait for his Laws  
 and 42. 4. " A voice came from Heaven saying,  
 This is my beloved Son, hear ye him. Be wise  
 ye Kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth:  
 kiss the Son. Ps 2, 12. The Ruler ought to be a  
 living Law, and to remember the noble saying of  
 the far to the Roman Senate, *In maxima fortuna mini-*  
*us solentis est* ; which is true, as he there reckon-  
 in as far as the faults of Rulers being more no-  
 torious, are otherways also aggravated above the  
 transgressions of others. But herewith consider  
 the Law being the mind of the Ruler ; a lawless  
 ruler, as a self-contradictor, maketh himself a trans-  
 gressor: If the Law be evil, why did he make it?  
 if it be good, then why should he break it?  
 8. The good Ruler is a wise person. It is wis-  
 dom that saith Prov. 8. 15, 16. *By me Kings reign*  
*and Princes decree Justice: by me Princes Rule, and*  
*judges, even all the Judges of the earth.* You have  
 in mind of the wisdom of Solomon: and David his  
 father was as an Angel of God discerning Good and Evil  
 and who wiser than Daniel? Happy Common-  
 wealth where either wise men reign, or Kings  
 study wisdom. Six Things in morality and Divi-  
 nity

nity, in Reason and Scripture contribute to wisdom, *Knowledge, Understanding, Invention, Counsel, Judgment, and Prudence*: which, howbeit because of their affinity and mutual concurrence, they are often used promiscuously; yet, having naturally their distinct proprieties, I shall endeavour, as I can, to marshal them in their due order, especially as required in the Ruler. 1. *Knowledge* taketh up things simply and historically as they are or appear, and hath its treasure chiefly in the Memory: it is purchased and preserved either by observation and experience, for "a wild mans eyes are in his history" or by reading; "Abasuerus caused read the Chronicles;" "Daniel understood by Books. The Book of the Game and play are the two things that take up Children: If the Latter be not below the Ruler, surely he is not above the former: he who will not be a Child at Book, may happily prove such indeed in company; and he who will not be serious in Life, may readily *Ludere in re serui*. We know what account *Alexander* had, and what use he made of the works of *Plato*, I suppose most of the *Philosophy* then extant. And in all ages and places where Letters were received, what a price have Princes put upon learned men and Libraries? How glorious *Historians* were the bravest Emperours? Or what Knowledge is got by tradition and information from others; before books were used, or where they were not known. We have heard with our ears, what our fathers have told us was the History practiced. I suppose History was not much known to that Nation in the dayes of *Salomon*, yet we find



kind court to his People of the Noble acts of their  
 counsellors, as exactly as if he had been reading a  
 recantation of History: 2. *Understanding*, lodged high-  
 in the upper room of the speculative Judge-  
 ments, and reaching deeper, discovereth things in  
 their original, and taketh them up in their causes,  
 sheweth how they are. Simple knowledge without  
 understanding is like those of whom we read in  
*Isaiah. 43. 23.* "That seeing they see not, and  
 hearing they hear not, neither do they understand:  
 in the faith well. It is a good Memory that remem-  
 bereth a thing and the reason thereof: I add, it is a  
 broad knowledge that knoweth a thing and the  
 causes thereof; *felix qui potuit &c.* Are there in a  
 land abuses and corruptions? are their decays and  
 desolations? here is the wisdom of the Ruler, se-  
 riously to consider "for what the land perissheth,  
 why is it burnt up as a wilderness *Jer. 9. 2.* And  
 he becometh willing as concerned to know, the next  
 shall be willing to solve him; "because they have forsaken  
 my Law, which I set before them, and have not  
 obeyed my voice, neither walked therein, but  
 have walked after the imagination of their own  
 Princes heart &c. The *Pharisees* when they were afflicted,  
 on inquiry found, that it was not a chance, but  
 the hand of God that afflicted them, for his *Ar-  
 rogance* which they held captive: *Sam. 6.* And *Pharao* to  
 be taught was taught understanding, because he would  
 not let the People go to serve the Lord. *Genesi-  
 s. 3.* and *18. Abimelech* King of *Gerar* was taught to  
 understand the cause of the barrenness of his house;  
 that he had taken a mans wife. The same is shew-

ed by *Hosea* chap. 4. 10. *They shall consume the borders and shall not increase.* In a word, whatsoever plague whatsoever sore is upon a People, it springs from the formal cause of corruptions, and meritoriously from afflictions and desolations. *The Crown is fallen from our head; we unto us for we have sinned.* 3. *Imagination*, a great affinity with understanding; this resolving of objects into their causes, and that producing effects from their causes, like a Latine Version of a Hebrew line and sentence, rendering forward what was read backward. This is feeded by observation, and conceived by Imagination: It's issues, if weaker and tenderer, called fancies; if masculine and stronger, Engines say, witty inventions. The Ruler must be an inventor of fit means to reform the abuses, remove the misery, further and settle the good and welfare of his People: Such as *Nehemiah* chap. 7. 5. acknowledgeth that *God put into his heart for peopling and manning of Jerusalem*: and such as his appointed the Priests and Levites in their offices for the service of God, and instruction of the People: his causing shut the gates ordinarily with the Sun for defence of the City, and sooner before the Sabbath, for its sanctification: and that of not eating the bread of the Governour, for the ease of the People: his causing restore their Lands mortgaged by oppression: his making a Covenant and entering the People into a curse with their own consent, for advancing reformation. O that *Wisdom*, by which King *Reign*, would reach them the knowledge of such *witty inventions*! *Counsel* is an assembly of the wits for advice, and the

order the exercise and tryal of inventions, that it  
 may be known what is good, or what is better, and  
 what *Israel* ought to do. chap: 5, 7. *I consulted with*  
*myself* (saith *Nehemiah*) *and I rebuked the nobles*  
*and the Rulers: and I set a great Assembly against them;*  
 appointed a high Commission for bearing down  
 oppression: and that was amongst the rest of  
 his Noble Inventions. 5. *Judgment* is the Chair-man  
 and Umpire of Counsel, determining, approving, and  
 bestowing sentences, as bad or good, good or bet-  
 ter: and resting in one thing, as a close of the mat-  
 ter; *Abraham* sayeth, *give counsel among you*; they  
 say, *the counsel of Abraham is good, but the counsel of*  
*Isaac is better*; For the great Counsel-  
 er had appointed the one to defeat the other:  
 counsel is good but determination is necessary: else  
 who hath much, is no better than he who hath  
 nothing to say in a matter: and wavering in coun-  
 sel proves but Weakness of Judgment. Consultati-  
 on should end in Resolution, and Resolution in Ex-  
 ecution (as we see in *Nehemiah*) for that whereof  
 we are speaking is the practical judgment. 6.  
*Prudence* that wise and Religious Matron, who  
 with the gravity of her countenance putteth to  
 shame and silence the folly of *Atheism*, and insolence  
 of impiety, in her whole carriage keepeth such  
 measure and decency as courteth into her devo-  
 tion all that is worshipped: *Nullum numen abest si*  
*Prudentia*; and guideth her affaires with such  
 discretion, that by Scripture and Reason, Di-  
 vines and Philosophers she is deservedly preferred  
 to the Government of Manners, and intrusted with

the ballance and standard of vertues, which in all things keep that measure *quam vir prudens detrahit*. She relieveth man of the great misery that lyeth upon him, teaching him to know both time and purpose: for to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. She to fixeth resolutions to the exigent of occasions, as maketh them both safe and seasonable, decent and effectual. She foreseeeth the evil and avoideth it, and taketh the good in its season: she saveth a man the expence of Apologies, and shame of *non putare*. And thus *Nebemias* was wise to know the Counsell of his enemies, and conceal his own purposes to the opportunity. And this is the Rulers prudence neither to let the evil approach him, nor the good escape him; nor ought he to say to the People come again another time, when it is in the power of his hand to do them good, lest hind-bald occasion find him, and his power perish with the opportunity. *1 Chron. 12. 32.* The Children of *Isachar* were men that had understanding of the times, to know what *Israel* ought to do. *Tempus nosce* was the saying of *Pittacus* of *Mitylena*, reckoned the first of the Greek sages. To day if ye will hear his voice, is the saying of the only wise God: and, O that it hadst known, even thou in this thy day! Was the wail and Lamentation of the consubstantial Wisdom God. Be wise now therefore O ye Kings: be instructed ye Judges of the earth *Psalm. 2. 10.*

9. The good Ruler is a person of courage and valour, a gallant Person. In this *Nebemias* was eminent. This is the main and only thing so much

culcat by *Moses* upon *Joshua* his successor. *Jos. i. 7.*  
*Only be thou strong and very courageous.* This joyn-  
 ed with the former maketh *Consilio & animis* a  
 noble device for a Ruler : and he who is born with  
 those induements hath a horoscope more pro-  
 gnosticative of advancement, than he who is born  
 under the most Regnant Planets. The Gallantry  
 of the Ruler is evidenced in a resolute and inflexible  
 observance of all Gods Holy Commandments,  
 managre all opposition of his own lust and corrupti-  
 on : *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty,*  
*and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a City;*  
 Or of the example and insinuations of others, or  
 the scorn, and threats, and plots of enemies, or  
 the eminent degree of transgressors. If morality  
 and righteousness be the true measure of Gallantry,  
 surely the World hath many bastard ridiculous  
 Gallants, who dare do any thing but what is right  
 and Godly. But the courage of *Nehemiah* appear-  
 eth particularly. 1. In his address to the King in  
 behalf of his City that was desolate, and his  
 People that were in reproach and affliction. It is  
 no less unpardonable a reflection upon the Justice  
 and Royal goodness of a King, to be diffident in  
 requesting of him what is just, than to dare to ask  
 unjustly. *Nehemiah* when he is bid ask, all his  
 asking is for *Jerusalem chap. 2. 6, 7.* 2. In that he  
 can sustain the greif, displeasure, and scorn of  
 malicious heathen enemies for the work of Re-  
 formation *Ibid. 10, v.* 3. In that he dare achieve  
 so desperat like a work as was the repairing of *Je-*  
*rusalem* so vast desolations. *v. 17.* 4. In his un-

conquered faith and confidence of Gods assistance, 20. v. *he was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* 5. In the atcheivment of a double employment, building and fighting. *Chap. 4. 17.* A coward may build a City in peace, and a slugard may defend himself in a strong City; but a Warrior only can build with one hand and fight with the other. 6. In his rebuking the Nobles and the Rulers for their oppression, *chap 5. 7.* An act of native gallantry, and an example for all that deserve to be in eminency; the matter of *Holy Jobs* Gloriation *chap. 31. 34.* *Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence?* 7. In his rare generosity refusing, because of the fear of God, to eat the bread of the Governour, or to bow to the example of those that had been before him, *who had been chargeable to the People.* The good Ruler dare be singular in vertue, and accounts it his honour, not to take evil, but to give good example. What an unexcusable incongruity is it for a man who should be exemplary to others in good, to submit to evil example? And it is the voice of *Roman* gallantry, *discant alii potius nostro exemplo recte facere, quam nos illorum peccare.* 8. In his inexorable resistance, even to the fifth time, of his enemies treacherous pretences for accommodation, with a design to do him mischief: 6. *chap.* wherein is no less manifest his singular wisdom.

10. The good Ruler is a vigilant, active, and diligent person. We find *Nebemiah* in continual motion, acting himself, and exciting others in their

ance, their respective orders, like a great Superior Orb winding the Inferior in their subordinate courses. For it is the inseparable, undenyable right of Supremacy, to take inspection of all, and put every one to his proper duty. And as the Superior Orb moves not symmetrically in the place of the Inferior, but moves in its place concentrically: Just so is the case of the Ruler. The slothful and soft Ruler is one upon the matter; and if there be any odds, a waking living Dog is better than a sleeping dead Lyon. It was *Nehemiah's* Honour, that neither the People, nor his own servants, nor the Princes and Rulers could be evil without a witness, as they were not good without an example. Whence.

11. The good Ruler is a person of an exemplary conversation: *alios quod monet ipse facit*: he practiseth the same, that he commandeth: by a leading example he goeth out and in before the People: *he walketh with a perfect heart within his house*. The World is Ruled by example. A good life is as necessar as good Laws in a Ruler; and an evil example more hurtfull than evil Laws: for that a pernicious Law may quickly be repealed; but bad example is not easily reformed. Laws governed by righteousness, and a life ordered by Law maketh the perfect Ruler. Thus we see *Nehemiah* exemplary in Religion, in refraining and restraining oppression, in wisdom, courage, vigilancy, and all the forementioned vertues: and this he hath left as a pattern to Rulers.

12. The good Ruler is a constant person, persevering

vering and abounding in well-doing: he is *fixed* and *unmoveable*, abounding *always* in the *mouth* of the Lord, knowing that his labour is not in vain in the Lord. Thus we see *Nehemiah* beginning with good designs and intentions, going on with gallant enterprises and good actions, and ending conformably with a good conscience, and Glorious expectation in the last act of his appearance: Remember me O my God for good. He remembereth that better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and that he who endureth to the end shall be saved; and that he is crowned who striveth lawfully, and therefore so runneth that he may obtain. He knoweth *Ezek. 18. 24.* When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, he shall not live: all his righteousnesses that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin, that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. He knows the *quinquennium Neronis*, and the mis-giving pretences and appearances of *Tiberius* and others: and he is better acquaint with Scripture than to be ignorant of the *Apollacy*, ingratitude, and fate of *Joah 2 Chron. 24.* Whereby is manifest that this observation is large as useful as true concerning the Ruler. But the path of the just is as the shining light which groweth brighter and brighter unto the noon-tide of the day. And such a one is the good Ruler.

Now from this illustrat Character shine forth in so many bright beams 1. The Original, 2. Dignity, 3. Duty, 4. Necessity, 5. Usefulness, and 6. Rarity



*The Character of a Good Counsellor.*

ity of the good Ruler. All which (so rich a piece of scripture) may be easily deduced from one sentence of *Platilla* 6. *I have said, ye are Gods; and ye are Children of the most high.* And because I know that both is evil manners, to some-  
times, and go hastily from the presence of a Ruler: I shall for a salutation shew up my view with this reasonable exhortation: That in this Atheistical age, the Ruler would do his Author the Honour, himself the pleasure, and a discontented, unbelieving World the favour, to shew forth so much of God in his person and administrations, that those who will not believe may see, and those who will not see may feel, *That there is a God, that God judgeth in the earth*; and that by his vicegerent; that he be unquestionably good himself, an encourager of those that do well, and a terror of evil doers: that by the shadow of Divinity in the Ruler, the World (if possible) may be convinced of the body and substance; and by the sight of the beautiful portrait may be enamoured of the original. And you O Christian People consider, Christ is not divided, nor contrary to himself. He is by nature and eternal Generation Lord of the World, and God of policy and order, as well as of the Church by pact and dispensation; and it is more than probable that Rulers hold not Christ as Mediator. Christianity received into the policy is not so untoward or unpleasant a Guest as to disturb its own quarter: and Religion but getteth the medlers blow when it sendeth a sword or occasioneth division. for of its own nature it is a harmless peace-pursuer;

fact; and they were sworn enemies and slanderers of our Saviour who said *he was an enemy to Caesar*; for he taught his followers to *give unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, and unto God the things that are Gods*. Learn then of him to pay what we owe unto the Ruler. How much are we indebted to so rare and excellent a creature as is the good Ruler? We owe the Ruler 1. Honour, in heart and behaviour. 2. Subjection, in lawful obedience or in humble submission. 3. Information and assistance in our respective stations. 4. Tribute, and the bread of the Governour, 5. And with all our owing we owe Prayer 1. *Tim. 2. 1. Sam. 24. 12.* As saith the Proverb of the ancients, *wickedness proceedeth from the wicked*: But God forbid that the hand of any that fear God should be upon the Lords anointed. A tender conscience so far exercised to Godliness as to flee from all appearance of evil, cannot digest the least approach to, or appearance of wrong to the Ruler: Say / this as a man, or sayeth not the Scripture the same also? *ibid. 5, v.* *David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Sauls shirt.*

The 5th view of this useful piece presents to us the Exit and retreat of the Ruler. Rulers, like men upon a Stage, walk much in a disguise, or, like *Mercury*, and *Aeneas*, in a cloud; but here we have the Ruler going off with open face, and with an eye to God, to himself, and to his reward. Remember me O my God for good. His eye is upon God. 1. As a Witness: for remembrance is of things known, and Gods knowledge is by sight and

Intuition. He that can say with *David Psal. 119*  
*168. All my ways are before thee*, may save the  
 travel and shun the ~~way~~ of those "that seek deep to  
 "hide their counsel from the Lord, and their  
 "works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth  
 "us? and who knoweth it? *Isa. 29. 15.* And their  
 "turning of things upside down is as the potters  
 "clay: they attempt more than they are able, and  
 presume where they have no power. A proud  
 Ruler may say to the Lords Messengers, *who made*  
*thee of the Kings Counsel?* But they would remem-  
 ber, that *Elisha* the Prophet could tell the King  
 of *Israel* the words which the Syrian King spoke in  
 his bed-chamber: and who told him but God that  
 heard them? Let Rulers learn in their time to put  
 God upon their counsels, and make him a witness  
 of their practises; lest when they must goe off, they  
 find with *Jacob*, that God was there, though they  
 knew it not, nor called him to the Council. 2.  
 As a Friend: *O my God.* Happy he, Ruler or other,  
 who can say with his Saviour, *I go to my Father*  
*and my God.* He may, in the Apostles words, pro-  
 claim a bold defiance to all adversity: *If God be*  
*with us who shall be against us?* He may meditat ter-  
 rour with the greatest security *Isa. 33. 18.* Though  
 the World should be shaken and suffer sack, he may  
 say with the Philosopher, but upon better reason,  
 that he is sure to be no loser: yea though Hell  
 were poured upon him, and heaven should seem  
 to have forsaken him, *My God, My God* even then  
 shall support him, *Every one seeks the Ruler's favour;*  
 and the Ruler would study to have a friend of his  
 Superi-

Superior. They who court alliance and interest would be perswaded that this is the highest. Beware of that friend that makes God an enemy, and of that gain where God is lost. Luther pronounces him a Divine, who can well distinguish the Law and Gospel: and he is no less a Christian, Ruler or other, who can reconcile them in my God. Wouldst thou either get or know an interest in God, take the short and sure method of the Psalmist, who also himself was a great Ruler, in that golden Ps. 16, 2. *O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.* 3. As a rewarder: for his, remember, being a figure that putteth the antecedent for the consequent, in proper speaking is, reward me. And shall not he render to every man according to his works? Prov. 24, 12. Ps. 62, 12 And verily there is a reward for the righteous. Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. I fear the bad reward of some, hath tempted others to do well to themselves in their own time; but with greater reason I fear that those who are thus tempted, have but a faint respect to the recompense of reward. But God who is not unfaithful, to forget the service and labour of any, will sure be mindful of a good Ruler. If Jehosaphat be reprov'd, his faults remembred, and wrath threatned; yet his good deeds are not forgotten: Nevertheless there are good things found in thee 2 Chron. 19. 2. 3. Most frequently through the Scripture the saints petition for reward is presented in the Word, Remember, whereby they refer particulars to him who is able to do abundantly above all that they are

are able either to ask or think. David sayeth, remember me; Jeremiah sayeth, remember me; Ezekiah and Nehemiah say, remember me; and Augustine sweetly rendereth Psal. 8. 4. *Domine quis est homo nisi quia memoretur ei* Lord, what is man but that thou art mindful of him? And happy he whose name is written in that Book of Remembrance that is before the Lord Mal. 3. 16. And when each man comes to be rewarded, malicious opposers of reformation, and profane corrupters of Religion and the Covenant of the priesthood may readily come to be remembered Chap. 6. 14 and 13. 19. 2. In his retreat he goes off with an eye to himself; Remember me &c. The Ruler who would make a honourable retreat, and come fair off, would look to 5 Things chiefly that concern himself. 1. His conscience. Can he say with Nehemiah? chap. 5. 19. "Remember me O my God for good according to all that I have done for this People: and chap. 13. 14. Remember me O my God concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for the offices thereof. Or with Hezekiah 2 King 20. 3. "I beseech thee O Lord remember now, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight? Or with Samuel 1 Sam. 12. 3. "I have walked before you from my Childhood to this day: behold here I am, witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?

32? *The Character of a Good Commissioner.*

“*Blinded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose*  
“*hand have I received any bribe to blind mine*  
“*eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. Or*  
“*if in any thing, as a man, he hath erred, for that*  
“*he must say to God with Nehemiah chap. 13, 22.*  
“*Remember me O my God and spare me accord-*  
“*ing to the greatness of thy mercy. A good con-*  
“*science is a strong comforter: but Gods sweet and*  
“*tender mercies are the sinners last refuge and sure*  
“*salvation: and it is Bellarmines own Conclusion.*  
“*Tutus tamen est adhaerere Christi Justitia.* And if so,  
“*why should unhappy men so voluminously dispute*  
“*against their own mercy? Psal. 119. 77. “Let thy*  
“*tender mercys come unto me that I may live, was*  
“*the suit of the man according to Gods heart, the pat-*  
“*tern of Rulers. And truly this Generation would*  
“*be advised to amend their manners before they*  
“*change their Religion, lest under the gilded large-*  
“*net of Popery, by the Doctrine of merits, they be*  
“*involved and held in the inextricable grin of de-*  
“*speration: Or if indulgence and pardon in end*  
“*must do it, what ails them at Gods, which is in-*  
“*finitely better than the Popes, and incomparably*  
“*surer, beside that it is manifestly cheaper? But for*  
“*the Conscience of a Ruler, who can say with Tertu-*  
“*llian that darling of mankind? Non extare ullum suum*  
“*salutem Peritendum, excepto duntaxat uno. 2. His sent.*  
“*The Soul and Conscience are of such affinity that*  
“*he who destroyes the one cannot save the other:*  
“*“And what doth it profit a man though he should*  
“*gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*  
“*“Or what is the hope of the Hypocrite, though he*  
“*hath*

*The Character of a Good Commissioner.*

75

hath gained, when God taketh away his soul. The soul is the man, and he hath got his price who gets that for a Prey. "The end of our faith is the salvation of our souls" *Psal. 119. 175.* "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, was the care and suit of that excellent Ruler. And what a pity is it to see a Ruler upon a retreat from the World, and from the Body, going off with such a lamentable Dirgie, as did *Adrian the Emperour, in Velus Spartianus.*

*Animula vagula, blandula,  
Hospes comesque corporis,  
Qua nunc abibis in loca?  
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,  
Nec ut soles dabis jocos.*

Or with such a hideous rage as *Tiberius* in *Suetonius*, like one speaking out of *Hell: Du me Deaque ejus perdant quam quotidie perire sentio. 3.* His fame and memory, a matter that highly concerneth the Ruler, as in the last view shall be shewen more fully. His posterity natural or politick. 5. His Works, both which are expressed together in that Prayer of *Moses* the man of God *Psal. 90. 16; 17.* "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy Glory unto their Children: and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it. The good Ruler not like the "Ostrich, which God hath deprived of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her

"understanding; that is hardened against her young  
 "ones as though they were not hers; her labour  
 "is in vain without fear *Joh 39. 16, 17.* This re-  
 gard to the work of God, and to the good of po-  
 sterity, made *Moses* record his Song *Deut. 31, and*  
*32.* and moved him to bless the People *chap. 33.*  
 This moved *Joshua* to make a Covenant *chap. 24.*  
*25.* This begot in *David* such a desire to build  
 house unto the Lord. This made *Hezekiah* weep  
 bitterly, that the begun Reformation was like to  
 cease by his death. This incited *Paul* that great  
 Church-Ruler so zealously to warn and guard the  
 believers against what should happen after his de-  
 parture. This made *Moses* and *David* before their  
 death so carefully give charge to their successors  
 concerning their duty. This moveth all men natu-  
 rally at their death to leave their Counsel and Ble-  
 ssing to their posterity. And finally, this induceth  
 good Rulers in their time to establish good Ordi-  
 nances by which being dead they may speak to po-  
 sterity. 2. Like *Moses*, he makes his retreat with  
 a respect to the recompence of reward, *Re-*  
*member me, O my God, for good,* And that both  
 proposed in the promise *2 Sam. 23. 5.* "He hat-  
 "made with me an everlasting Covenant ordered  
 "in all things and sure; for this is all my Salvati-  
 "on, and all my desire; Or pledged in the testi-  
 mony of a good Conscience *2 King 20. 3.* "Re-  
 "member O Lord how I have walked before thee  
 "in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done  
 "that which is right in thy sight. He who can say  
 with *Job* "My witness is in Heaven, and my re-



*The Character of a Good Commissioner.*

cord on high, may justly say with *Isaiah*, my work is with the Lord, and my reward with my God. For surely there is an end, and the expectation of the righteous shall not be cutt off. Now by these last words of the *Trostatke*, the Ruler would be warned, in time to think of his retreat, how he may make it good with honour. For whether slow footed Time, which changeth not his pace for fair weather or foul, for Summer or Winter, advance at the ordinary rate of Journey; or whether death take post, or changes take wing, and calamity come suddenly; or whether all these hold the ordinary road with a warning, or take the by-way with a surprisal, It is time for the Ruler to think of his removal. It is gravely observed by *Pedro Mexia*, that there is no death incident to men which hath not happened to Emperours: Discontent and Grief is so ordinar to their rank, that almost it seems to be proper: and how few of them escape a misfortune, even Children are taught from *Juvenal*.

*Ad generum Cereis sine cade & sanguine panis  
Descendant reges, & sicca morte tyranni.*

And in this consideration the Prayers made for Rulers and Emperours was a very necessary devotion, sanctified by the command of God, and confirmed by the examples of his servants in the Scriptures. Yet the Prayers which would not let *Pompey* die in prosperity, could not relieve him of final adversity. The Ruler would always expect his summons, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for

"thou mayest be no longer steward. The plays  
 which are but too much in fashion, act things that  
 are past; but the Ruler would erect a scene in his  
 Soul, and present there the things that may and  
 shall be; "That which hath been is the same that  
 "is, and that which is, is the same that shall be  
 "and there is nothing new: The Ruler must have  
 a successor, as he himself succeeded to another.  
 But beyond particulars *Dan. 7. 9. I beheld till the  
 thrones were cast down,* were a divertisement wor-  
 thy of the Ruler; who if he would make a safe re-  
 treat, would beware of these things in particular.  
 That he come not short in reality of that which was  
 denied *Moses* in the type *'Deut. 34. 4. The Ca-  
 man above,* "the Land that is afar off, the rest  
 "that remaineth for the People of God. I have  
 "caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou  
 "shalt not go over thither. A sad matter for  
 a ship to perish in the harbour, for a man to go  
 to Hell as it were in sight of Heaven: for a Ruler  
 at once to be robbed of his Soul and his Authority,  
 who can sufficiently bewail his misery? I say this  
 happened *Moses* in the type; for that he is already  
 possess'd in Glory is manifest from *Heb. 11.* and  
*Luke 13. 28. 2. Of Solomons fate,* That by their  
 Apostacy and transgression they leave not the  
 World to dispute their salvation; as *Papists* and  
*Antinomians* make him an instance of the final Apo-  
 stacy of Saints; though they fail in probation and  
 fall short of their Enterprise. It were the wisdom  
 of the Ruler by his unquestionable Goodness to put  
 to silence evil speakers. 3. of the fate of *Isaiah*

who for his Apostacy, ingratitude, and trespass, was taken away in a hurry with terror and misery 2. *Chron*; 24. 23. and foreward. They who are bold to sport with Eternity would beware that time bear not witness of their folly. 4. Of *David's* calamity; That they entail not a Judgment to their house and posterity; "The sword shall not depart from thy house. / the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth generation. *Manassah* is a witness how much hereditary misery may come upon posterity for the sins of Rulers. 5. Of *Jeroboams* memory; That he bear not the brand of infamy with posterity, *who made Israel to sin.* And this inviteth me to another view.

The 6th view of these words obviously presenteth the *Memoire of the Ruler*: And, being recorded as a part of the History, giveth this friendly and pertinent warning to all in Authority, That they would really be such as willingly they would offer themselves by History to be represented to the World and to posterity: and that with *Job* they may say *Chap. 31. 35.* "O that mine Adversary had written a Book! &c. *Prov. 22. 1.* A good Name is rather to be chosen than great Riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold: and the Apostle recommendeth to all, "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report. *Cicero pro Archia* excellently saith: *trabimur omnes Landis studio: & optimus quisque maxime gloria ducitur.* And *Tiberius* in *Tacitus Lib. 4.*

*Annal*: bringeth this so near, that in a manner he impropriateth it to the Ruler; *Ad ea Tiberius Cateris moribus in eo stare consilia, quid hinc conducere putent: Principum diversam esse sortem quibus praeceptum rerum ad famam dirigenda.* So that all men in their measure, good men more, and Rulers who should be the best men, most and chiefly are governed by regard to their fame and Memory. And this is their study: though, if so their fate be, to do well and be ill spoken of, is no less Princely: according to the saying vented by *Anisibenes*, used by *Alexander*, and imitated by the Emperour *Adrianus Aurelius Antoninus* the Philosopher. The Ruler would seriously remember, That the World will not die with him: and that there will be men to speak and write when he shall not be found to answer: That fear and flattery, the two abusers of living Rulers, like enraged Cowards (*nam timidi sumum quodque est idem crudelissimum*) turn the most insolent avengers, and sarcastick insulters over the Dead that bite not. Let the fates of *Sejanus* that great Minion, of *Tiberius* his master, of *Domitian* and generally all wicked Emperours and Rulers be witnesses with a warning. *Tacitus* that great state Historian, and the Rulers Author, against whom nothing can be excepted, in the entry of his History tells us, That the acts and affairs of *Tiberius*, *Caligula*, *Claudius* and *Nero*, while they flourished were falsely represented by fear; but after they fell, were sett off with fresh hatred. If the voice of a flattering, fearful, interessed, discontented, changeable multitude be rejected as partial, or sleighted as

insufficient, whose mouths notwithstanding it were  
 later they were stopped; yet the Ruler would  
 well consider what he leaves a *Tacitus*, an impar-  
 tial Author to say, who writes *sine ira & studio, quo-*  
*rum causas procul habet*; who can tell him *contem-*  
*pta, contemni virtutes*. But lastly the Ruler above all  
 should consider, what he deserves at the hands of  
 God that cannot lie, who deceiveth not nor is de-  
 ceived, the faithfull witness, the sovereign Ruler  
 of fame, unerring giver of names, and just dispen-  
 ser of honours, who hath testified *I Sam*; 2, 30.  
 Them that honour me, *I* will honour, and they  
 that despise me shall be lightly esteemed: And  
*Job*. 10. 7. "The memory of the just is blessed,  
 but the memory of the wicked shall rot. That  
 ruler hath given a desirable subject for History,  
 and erected a fair and enduring Monument for his  
 memory, who can say with *Nehemiah*, Remember  
 O my God for good, according to all that I have  
 done for this People, and for the house of my God: for  
*Isa*. 11 2, 6. The righteous shall be in everlasting re-  
 membrance; and ver. 9. his righteousness endureth for-  
 ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour.

F I N I S.

D

**I**

**P**

He

1

•

:

•

3

•

1

—

**Ed**

# GRAPES IN THE Wilderness:

OR A

Discourse fitted to all Times,  
Treating of the  
Dispensations of GOD,

AND OF

The pertinent Duties and Comforts of His  
PEOPLE in these Times.

WITH A

Preface of the fulness of Scriptur sufficiency  
for Answering all Cases.

---

Hosea 9. 10, I found Israel like Grapes in the Wilderness  
Jer. 2, 2. I Remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the  
love of thine espousals, when thou wast after me in the Wil-  
derness in a Land that was not sown. Numb. 33, 1. These  
are the journeyes of the Children of Israel, which went forth  
out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of  
Moses and Aaron. 2 Verse. And Moses wrote their going  
out, according to their journeyes by the Commandment of the  
Lord, and these are their journeyes according to their going  
out. 1 Epistle of John 1 3 That which we have seen and heard,  
declare we unto you.

Written in the Wilderness.

---

Edinburgh, Printed by George Mosman, and are to be Sold at  
his Shop in the Parliament-Close, Anno Dom. 1692.

II



hin  
loc  
ma  
the  
lan  
ot  
bre  
Go  
eve  
spe  
and  
ref  
cell  
to a



# THE PREFACE,



THE Jews have a Tradition of that *Manna* wherewith God fed *Israel* in the *Wilderness* fourtie years, that the taste thereof was such, and so various, that it answered every mans Appetit, and tasted to him of whatsoever food his soul desired. And look how uncertain is that Jewish Tradition of the *materiall Manna* that was gathered off the Earth for the space of fourty years in the *Wilderness* of the land of *Egypt*: So certain is this Christian Truth of the *Spiritual Manna* the word of God, that bread of Heaven, that Angels food, wherewith God feeds his Church in all ages successively, and every Child of his House the *Israelites* indeed respectively, throughout the whole course of their life and travel in the World, which is the great *Wilderness*: that it hath in it a real supply of all their necessities, and hath always in it a word in season to all persons, at all times, and in every condition:

To

To the Dead, it is life: to the living, it is health: to the weary, it is refreshment: to the weak, it is strength: to Babes, it is milk: to strong men, it is meat: to the hungry, it is bread: to the thirsty, it is waters: To the drooping soul and sorrowful heart, it is wine: to the faint, it is apples and Pomegranats, cinnamon, saffron, spiknard, Calamus and all spices of the merchant. To such who love dainties, it is marrow and farnels, honey of the rock and dropping from the honey-comb: to the wounded, it is the balme of Gilead: to the blind and weak sighted, it is eye salve and oymntment to anoint the eyes. To such neat souls as love to be all Glorious within, and to keep clean Garments, it is a Crown, chains of the neck, bracelets, ear-rings, pendants and Ornaments of all sorts: and if they like to be in fashion and to go fyne in the court of a Heavenly Conversation and communion with God, it presents them a bright large glasse whereat they may dayly adorn themselves to purpose. This Glasse is no falsifying nor multiplying Glasse, but a just discovering and directing one; here are also discovered not only all the obliquities of gesture, and faults of feature; and all spots upon the face or cloaths, but likewise the very inmost thoughts and intents of the heart with the most subtile imaginations of the mind are here manifested. Here ye are directed to fit all your Soul-ornament in the fynest spiritual fashion, and to compose your gesture and order your motion, so as you may be able to stand in the presence of *him who is greater than Solomon*. This large bright Glasse doth stand in King Solomons bed-

Cham

## The P R E F A C E.

Chamber in the Book of *Canticles*, and in it you may see your self from head to foot. There ye see the head beautiful with locks. *Cantic. 4.* There ye see the sweet comly Countenance of the Saint, which the Lord is so much in love with, that he is in continual desire to see it: there you see those eyes that ravish his heart and so throughout even to the feet that are very beautiful with shooes. *Chap. 7. 1.* For such as are destitute and unprovided, the word of God is a portion: to the poor, it is Riches of treasure of choice Silver and fine Gold. Here is that which dispelleth darknes, cleareth doubts, dissolveth hardness, disappointeth fears, dischargeth cares, solaceth sorrows, and satisfieth desires. Here is counsel and strength for peace and war. Here is daily intelligence from Heaven. And in a word, here is the best Companion that ever a soul did choose. And blessed they who can spiritually tone that short but high note *Psal. 119. 98. Thy Commandments are ever with me.* And that they are not with the soul as a burden of idle attendants are with a man, see what good offices they perform by their presence. *Prov. 6. 22, 23.* They are as *Hobab* to *Israel*, and *David* to *Nabal*, Eyes and a Guard to us in the *Wilderness*. In the World, and chiefly in this World we change seats and Societies, we shift conditions and habitations, we go thorow the *Wilderness* of *Bacah* from troop to troop; we are driven from Temple, Altar, and Oracle, and we are divided from our relations and dearest acquaintance whom we loved as our own Soul, we are spoiled of our Companions with whom

whom *we took sweet counsel and went into the house* of God. But blessed that Soul who in all this can say I am not alone. my good old friend, the word of God, the Bible the guide of my Youth hath not yet forsaken me, it is with me, yea it is in me, in the midst of my heart, and I bear about me daily a living copy of those lively Oracles, and they are more near me than my very self: for my heart is within me, and they are within my heart. I may be separated from my self by death that parts the dearest Friends, my heart may be pluckt from my breast, and my Soul dislodged of my Body, but my Companion, the word of God and me shall nothing part. Prosperity shall not cause me forget it. And adversity will not cause it forget me. *I will never forget thy Precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me. Psal. 119. 93.* As those who live upon the shoar have a very just diall of the measure and motion of the water, which they can make use of without the sun; so are the ebbings and flowings of our affections to the word of God, the surest, most universall, and constant witnesses of our daily condition: for albeit the darkness that is upon the face of our Souls may pretend that it is night with us; yet if it be full sea in our affection to the word of God, we may be sure it is noon day: and when it is low water in our affection to the word, sure then, it is mid-night: and the sun was never seen at mid night. Be sure, it is ill with that Soul that is out of conceit with the word of God.

NOW to say nothing of the malignant qualities of gross ignorants, prophane Atheists, and obstinate

## The PREFACE,

5

mate unbelievers who are habitually disaffected to  
 the word of God: nor yet to mention the willful  
 groundless fits of pettish distempers in Saints, who  
 often times do even take up at their foot ground-  
 less and needless pleases and discouraging apprehen-  
 sions which they cannot so easily lay down again  
*Psal. 42, 5, Why art thou cast down O my soul, and*  
*why art thou disquieted in me? Psal. 77. 2. My sore*  
*ran in the night and ceased not, my soul refused to be*  
*comforted.* To pass these, I say, as bearing no di-  
 rect impeachment of the abovesaid commendation  
 of the absolute sufficiency of the word of God to  
 answer all cases; There are *three Things* that in a  
 time of tentation, in an hour and power of dark-  
 ness do readily concur to diminish the Saints re-  
 spects to the word of God. The first is, that their  
 case seems odd, unparalleled, and unpracticable  
 in Scripture: they find no case equal with theirs  
 in all respects that hath been cured. 2 In their  
 weakness they thereupon conclude that their case  
 is really hopeless and irremediable. But 3 The  
 saddest of all is, that they find the word not only  
 silent for them, but to speak directly and aloud  
 against them, as they think, smiting, hewing and  
 hammering them, with sad and heavy threatnings  
 and intimations of determined wrath rejection and  
 ruine to come upon them from the Lord. In all  
 these they err, not knowing the Scriptures, But  
 that yet for all this there is hope, and that the Scrip-  
 tures are not to be casten out with as unkind and  
 uncomfortable Companions in such cases, Let  
 these things be considered for vindication of the  
 Scriptures to Souls thus exercised.

And

And 1. Be it granted as the truth is, that  
 Soul's case may be such for Circumstances, that the  
 Scriptures mention none Parallel with it in all  
 points to have been cured ( the same is all along to  
 be understood respectivly of Churches and Nati-  
 ons as of particular persons ) yet I am confidently  
 perswaded, that there is no case now incident to  
 any whether Nation, Church, or Person, but the  
 Scripture holdeth forth some either as evil or  
 worse, whether for sin or suffering that have been  
 helped. *There hath no temptation taken you* ( saye  
 the Apostle 1 Cor. 10 13 ) *but such as is common*  
*to man.* Is thy case sinful? behold the Scripture  
 tells us, that he obtained mercy who once a day  
 thought himself *the chief of sinners.* 1 Timoth. 1, 15  
 And that as an exquisite and rare piece of mercy  
 is set forth in the Gospel, for a pattern to all those  
 who should afterwards believe in Christ to life  
 everlasting. Christ loves to have sinners change  
 and for that he puteth forth his pattern, as Merchants  
 do their samplers of Rich Wares : and sure  
 he hath since that time put off many such pieces  
 and yet the pattern stands forth shewing that there  
 is more, abundance to serve all that have need. To  
 say nothing of *Paul's* sin which sure was great e-  
 nough, nor of many who since his time may have  
 thought themselves the chief of sinners as well as  
 he did (where I think I see a kind of strife among  
 mercies Clients who shall be most beholding to  
 free Mercy and free Grace ) This pattern makes  
 fully certain that there is mercy for the chief  
 sinners be who he will, and that he, whosoever

## THE PREFACE

that supposes himself the chief of sinners, is not thereby warranted to despair of mercy; but rather to plead the greatest interest of necessity, and to look upon himself as the fittest subject for the Lord, wherein to display his Glory. Is thy Case afflicted? And thy sufferings extraordinary? See *Job's* desperate Case, see *Heman's* distracted Case, see that Case of the Church in the Lamentations, in whose Case there is hope, though it had not been done under the whole Heaven as had been done to *Jerusalem*. Look to the cloud of Witnesses. Look to *Jesus* *Heb. 11.* and *12. Chapters*. But here is the great Case of the troubled Soul. Cleanly sufferings for the Exercise of my Grace, *Job's*, or for the testimony of Truth and a good Conscience, as those of all the Witnesses and Martyrs, I could well bear: In these respects, I count it all joy to fall into diverse temptations, and could count it my Honour and Mercy as well to suffer for Christ as to believe in him: I could do with such sufferings as *Job* would have done with his Adversaries Books; I could take them upon my shoulder, and bind them as a Crowne to me, and as a Prince would I go near unto him; but Alas! I suffer with an evil Conscience, my afflictions are to me the punishment of my iniquity, and the fruits of my folly. This case indeed, if any, requireth the Tongue of the learned, and a word in season to the Soul that is weary of it; And if the word of God help me not here, I have lost the Cause, and come short of my Accounts. But there is hope in *Israel* also concerning

ing this thing. *Ezra. 10. 2.* And I find the Scripture clear in these particulars concerning this case.

1. I find indeed a great odds betwixt cleanly suffering for righteousness, and suffering meerly for doing. The one is a thing thank-worthy, and Glorifying of God in the highest manner actively: the other is not thank-worthy, but is the mans misery. In the one a man hath a good Conscience and joy therefrom: in the other a man hath an ill Conscience, with terrour and sorrow proceeding therefrom. The one gives a man good confidence of assistance, and of the Spirit of Glory and of God to rest upon him: the other makes a man despondent and droop. The one stops, the other opens the mouths of wicked men. Therefore sayes *Peter. Pet. 3. 17.* *It is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*

2ly It is clear that we ought to bear such Afflictions with the more patience, *Micah 7. 9.* *I will be patient with the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Nor ought any living man to complain who suffers meerly for the punishment of his iniquity. *Lam. 3. 39.* and if he must complain let him complain to God, and bemoan his case in quietness to him. It is far better for men to bear their yoke quietly and sit alone, than to pine away in their iniquity Mourning one to another whilst they do not Complain to the Lord. Too much whining and complaining to men will be found Labour which profiteth not, try it who will. But as a man would complain to God. so he would beware to complain of God: he would leave his complaint upon him.



# The P R E F A C E.

19

self. Job 10. 1. and lay the blame of his afflictions  
home upon himself. *Psal 38. 5. My folly makes us so.*

3. It is clear from the whole History of the  
Scriptures, that most of all the Saints Afflictions,  
whether conjunctly in the Body of a Church or  
Nation, or severally in their own persons particular-  
ly, have been the chastizments of their iniquities  
and the *Rods of men*, that is, such corrections as men  
use upon misdemeaning Children: I find this true of  
publick Affliction of a whole Church or Nation.

4. It is clear, that the Lords Rods, whe-  
ther publick or personal upon his sinful People,  
flow from love in the fountain, are mixed with  
love in their course, and run forth into love in the  
issue. If this seem strange to any, let him re-  
member, that he who *spareth his Rod, hateth his Child*  
*as he that chasteneth him becometh delivereth his*  
*soul.* Gods thoughts concerning his People  
are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give them an  
expected end. Jer. 29. 11. And in the midst of  
wrath he will remember mercy. Habbac. 3. 2. Gods  
love to his People is very consistent with anger,  
though that be even fervent to the Degree of wrath,  
but not with hatred; and hatred, not anger, is  
Gods opposite: an angry love is oftentimes most pro-  
fitable. Heb. 12. 10. Let none therefore be so  
weak and Child-witted as to conclude, I am  
sharply scourged, and sore smitten for my folly,  
therefore my Father hath cast me off and cares  
not for me. And yet we find Affliction, that mak-  
eth a wise man mad, raising such apprehensions oft-  
times in the wise heart of strong David. I do

Not here speak how the Lord causeth his People  
 to pass under the rod, and bringeth them within the  
 bond of the Covenant Ezek. 20, 37. and how he  
 chooseth them in the furnace of Affliction *Isa* 48. 10  
 and that was an Affliction for sin and sadly de-  
 served Rod: And yet the Lord when he would  
 pick out a piece of the finest mettall, goes neither to  
 Coffer nor Cup-board, where the glistering of Peace  
 and posterity dazle the eyes of undescreeet behol-  
 ers; but he goes to the smoak and Soot of the  
 furnace, and there he pitcheth upon the rare  
 Saints of the last refine: The Lord goeth down  
 to the Land of Affliction and to the house of Bo-  
 dage to visit his People, and there he falls in  
 with them, there he wooes them, and there he  
 wedds them in their mourning Garments: For they  
 get not the oil of joy nor the Garment of Praise  
 till the second day of the Marriage, and then they  
 rise from the Dust and shine, their light cometh  
 and the Glory of the Lord ariseth upon them. See  
*Isa* 48. 10. cited, *Hos*. 2, 14. and foreward. *Isa*  
 61. 3. and 60. 1. In fine, the Scripture is full  
 rare and satisfactory Expressions of Gods love to  
 his People, even under sufferings which their own  
 wickedness hath procured, whereof it will apper-  
 tain to speak more particularly in the sequel of our  
 ensuing Discourse.

*5thly* It is clear from Scripture, that there is no  
 difference to be put betwixt sin procuring and  
 bringing on Sufferings and bitter Afflictions, and  
 sin discovered in and by suffering. Let God call  
 a Holy *Job* in the furnace, and it will discover

# The PREFACE.

11

scourge, that will cause him say, *My Transgressions*  
*are infinite.* And yet the Lord himself sustains *Job's*  
*Plea*, that it was not for sin that he was pursuing  
 him.

6. It is clear that there is a great difference of-  
 ten times betwixt the Righteousness of God, and  
 the Righteousness of Men Afflicting his People :  
 as we see frequently in *David's* Cales. Yea I find  
 an excellent, rare, comfortable Dispensation of  
 God to his People, that he will sometimes scourge  
 them with the Golden Rod of Martyrdom, and  
 correct their faults in an Honourable way, and  
 chastise them soundly, and yet never let the World  
 know, what is betwixt him and them. The  
 Lord loves not to proclaim and blaze the bemoan-  
 ed faults of his People, nor to make them Odious  
 to the World which hath a bad enough Opinion of  
 them alwayes: But if I must correct my Child  
 saith he, I will stay till the World and he fall out  
 in some point of Conscience, in Faith or manners,  
 so wherefore he must suffer, and then in my Graci-  
 ous Wisdom, I will shew a rare Conjunction or  
 meeting of these three Planets in one house. 1.  
 The correction of my Child. 2. His Glory, and 3.  
 His acceptable Duty; and I will let him earn a  
 reward of thanks and Glory in that very suffering  
 wherein I shall visit his iniquities, and he shall give  
 Testimony for me. God can go many *Estados* at  
 once, and fold up many Projects in one piece of  
 Providence: *the Lord will finish the whole work and*  
*cut it short in Righteousness, because a short work will*  
*the Lord make upon the earth.* Rom. 9. 28. The

Lord is good at dispatches. If the Question be then, whether God will ever Honour a Man with whom he hath a Controversie, to suffer for Righteousness? I Answer, Yes, and I confess I should hardly have been of that Judgment, if I had not found clear Divine truth going before me in it, comparing the whole tenor of the 38 Psalm with the 20<sup>th</sup> verse thereof: where at once the Psalmist is suffering from men for that which is good, and from God for his foolishness and iniquity. Verses 4, 5, and 18. Here it is fit to remember *Luther's* seasonable warning, that when *David* in his Prayers speaketh of his Righteousness, we would refer it to its true correlative, to wit, towards men his enemies he was Righteous; but towards God that is his Language, *Be merciful to me O God, be merciful to me, in the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities* Psal. 51. The accuser of Gods Children will be ready to carry ill reports betwixt him and them, and to keep up an ill understanding betwixt them, if he can, and in times of suffering for their Duty he will not be idle: he will tell them a thousand Stories of their own sins, to weaken their hands and cause them believe, that God will never accept service of them, but that they shall come foul off with all their fair Essays. Ye have heard of Gods Graciously Wisdom, and now these are the Devil's malicious wytes; but a Syllogism or Argument framed of one premise of Gods, and another of the Devil's, will never infer a Conclusion of Faith, and that can claime fiducial assent. Wherefore in such a mixed case,

# The P R E F A C E.

13

case, (which I desire may be remembered to be  
 very caseable) let a man freely *declare his iniquity*  
*to God and be sorry for his sin, Psal: 38. 18.* Let him  
 repent and mean himself to God, who (as I have  
 said) loves to keep his People's Counsel and to keep  
 their faults *sub sigillo confessionis* and *under the rose*,  
 that is, he will be to them a good Secretary, but  
 let them cleave to that which is good, and in-  
 courage themselves in a good matter, and beware  
 of failing in present Duty in a discouraging sense  
 of former iniquities: for one fault will never  
 pend another, and yet that is even the best me-  
 thod that *Satan* useth to offer in such cases: But  
 the Lord, that hath chosen *Jerusalem*, rebuke him,  
 for troubling his poor afflicted People, who are as  
 brands pluckt out of the fire. I have insisted upon  
 this case, because of it self it is a weighty *deserv-*  
*ing* one; and I have not seen any who hath direct-  
 ly spoken to it, but one who dispatcheth it to  
 good purpose in a word. It is worthy Mr. *Scud-*  
*der* in his *Christians dayly walk*, (this book was by  
 famous Mr. *Alexander Henderson* recommended  
 and gifted as a *vade mecum* or pocket piece to his  
 friend, at that time a young Gentleman going into  
 France) where, page 263 he speaketh thus. "You  
 will say, if you did bear Afflictions for Christ,  
 then you could think and expect well of it; but  
 you oftentimes suffer Affliction justly for your sin. I  
 Answer (saith he, for he had been speaking of  
 that Scripture, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18) though this  
 place principally point at Martyrdom and suffer-  
 ing for Christs cause; yet it is all one in your case

\* If you will bear Afflictions patiently for his sake  
 " A man may suffer Afflictions for Christ two ways  
 " First when he suffereth for his Religion and for  
 " his cause. 2<sup>dly</sup> when a man suffereth any thing  
 " that God layeth on him quietly and for Christs will  
 " and commands sake. This Latter is more general  
 " than the former, and the former must be compre-  
 " hended in this Latter : els the former suffering for  
 " Christs cause, if it be not in love and obedience for  
 " Christs sake, out of Conscience to fulfil his will  
 " is nothing ; whereas he that endureth patiently  
 " endures Affliction for Christ, though he never be  
 " put to it to suffer for profession of Christ : and  
 " such an one were put to it, he would readily suf-  
 " fer for Christs cause : and such Afflictions as they  
 " thus patiently endured, work also this excellen-  
 " weight of Glory as well as the other. By these  
 " and the like reasonings of faith, you may work  
 " your Souls to patience as *David* and others have  
 " done by casting Anchor on God and on his word  
 " fixing their stay and hope in God. Let the issue  
 " of your reasoning be this, I will wait on God, and  
 " yet for all matter of disquietment will praise him  
 " who is the health of my countenance and my God.  
 Thus Mr. Scudder, and truly none could have  
 spoken more, nor to better purpose in so few words.

And thus have I spoken to Scripture examples  
 of cases Parralleling the weightiest of cases, incident  
 to any man now living. Only be it remembered that  
 cases are as faces, many agree in some things some  
 in many things, none in all things. There is in every  
 mans case something peculiar, aggravating it beyond

that

# The P R E F A C E.

15

that of another man, and ( as the Heart knows its own grief ), every man knows best the plague of his own Heart ; but he knows not, at least feels not his Neighbours foreshadowings: Hence every one judgeth his own case worst of all, it may be the best is bad enough, and yet the worst is not so bad but it may be better.

In the second place, for Vindication of the Scriptures from the foresaid disheartning prejudices, I shall lay down this very self-ground, whereupon the querulous Soul doth walk, though with a halting foot. *That those Cases are hopeful and curable that are paralleled and practicable in Scripture*, that is to say, That such whereof the Scripture gives account, have been either hopeful and curable, or actually have been cured and helped. And thus I reason, *et converso*, or by exchange. That case is hopeful and curable which is paralleled and practicable: But such is thy case, it hath a match in Scripture, and therefore curable. That is Paralleled and hath a match in Scripture I prove thus: A case concluded hopeless hath a match in Scripture: But such is thy case, thou concludes it hopeless: And therefore it hath a match in Scripture. That a case concluded hopeless hath a match in Scripture, it is clear, in that the Lord finds fault with those in *Jeremiah*, that said their was no hope, and assures them there is hope; if they will return and repent. It is clear likewise from the Churches case in *Isaiah*, who said her judgment was passed over of the Lord, and for that is taxed, that she spoke unreasonably. Likewise from *David's* case in the *Psalms*, that said, *He was cut off from God's presence*, and yet he found

found heart to look again to God, and to cry to him and was heard, notwithstanding his former peremptoriness: Likewise from the case of the Church, or *Jeremiah* for the Church in the *Lamentations*, who with one breath said, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*, and at the next breath could say, *Thus I call to mind, therefore have I hope*. And thereupon hath left a general experimental instruction to all others, *That it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord*, *Lament. 3. 26*.

But in the third place, The Soul affected is to be advertised and put in mind, that it is an error and weakness to think that matchless and unparalleled cases, are therefore hopeless and uncurable: For it is to be considered, that Scripture instances and examples of parallel matching cases, are neither the only, nor compleat, nor principal ground of curing and resolving cases: For some cases were the first of their kind, and so could have no precedent, nor yet practicable example: And yet in that case, according to this crazie principle, *That no unparalleled Case is curable*, the very fixed examples and choice copies of curable cases should themselves have remained incurable, as having no precedent nor example: but the only square and compleat ground of curing all cases, is the whole Scripture, whereof examples are but a small part, and that too, but as the illuminating colours, and not the substantial lineaments thereof: For *exempla illustrans*, examples do but enlighten things, and all that an example can do, is to show that such a case is practi-



practicable, and potentially curable: But it doth  
not, it cannot actually cure it. Wherefore the  
principal, yea proper ground of resolving and cur-  
ing all cases, are the universal fundamental truths  
of the Gospel, the knowledge of God and Christ,  
and of God in Christ according to the Gospel,  
whereof the Covenant of Grace is the sum and  
text; and this *David* knew right well 2 Sam. 23. 5.  
This Covenant will mend all the holes of the be-  
lievers house, and compleatly fit every case he can  
be in: *Till the foundations be destroyed* it is never  
time to ask, *what can the Righteous do?* Psal. 11. 3.  
But so long as there is a God in Heaven that doth  
wonders, so long as Christ is all, and in all, and  
so long as Gods Covenant with his Saints endures,  
which shall be while Sun and Moon endure, and  
longer too, For his Covenant shall live to lay its  
hands upon those two shining Eyes of this cor-  
ruptible World that is passing and posting off daily,  
and which now (like the first Covenant, *Heb. 8. 13.*)  
decaying and waxing old, is ready to vanish  
and die; So long (I say) as these foundations stand  
sure, the righteous, in every case may still know what  
to do: *For upon these shall Mercy be built, and Faith-  
fulness established in the very Heavens, Psal. 89. 2.* I  
shall illustrate this consideration with the case of  
Relapses, a case right perplexing to exercised Spi-  
rits, and wherein they find the Scripture sparing of  
examples, at least of frequent relapses into the same  
fault, which, makes them apprehend there is no  
hope. These I write, not that any should sin (and  
therefore for that very cause, the Spirit of God in Wis-  
dom

dom hath been more sparing of such examples) but if any man have sinned and relapsed often into sin, Let him remember. 1. Christ's *Sevensy times* *Seven times.* *Matth 18, 22.* And withall, that as far as Heaven is above the earth, so far are his wayes above our wayes, and his thoughts above ours. *Isa. 55. 9.* Let him remember. 2. The indefinit promises *Ezek 18. 27.* and the like, That when and what time soever a sinner shall repent, he shall find mercy, 3. Let him remember chiefly, *the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin.* 1 *John 1; 7.* And lastly if he must have examples, Let him read the History of *Israel's* relapses in the book of *Judges*, Notwithstanding which, the Lord as often as he heard their penitent cryes, returned and Repented, and sent them Saviours. And let him read a notable place *Psalms 78. 38. 40.* In the 38 *verse*, many a time he delivered them, and forgave them: but how many times did he threaten in the 40. *verse*, how many a time did they provoke him? Even as often as they provoked him, as often he forgave them: And when any man shall tell me precisely how often they provoked him, I shall then tell him peremptorly how often he forgave them. A simple Soul may possibly think to prevail with God at a time, by pleading thus after the manner of men: Help me O Lord this once, and pardon my sin, and I shall never trouble thy Majesty again. I apprehend such are sometimes the thoughts of some. But when Heaven and earth shall be measured in one line, when God shall be as man or as the son of man, when his ways shall

be as our ways, and his thoughts as our thoughts; when I shall see the man that shall not be behold-  
 ing to mercy, Or the day wherein we ought not  
 to Pray, *forgive us our debts*, or the time when it  
 shall be lawful to limit *the Holy one of Israel*, then  
 shall I think that a convenient Argument: But if  
 I understand the Gospel, it might be more be-  
 seeming God and his Grace in the Gospel, to plead  
 after this manner; O Lord be gracious to me and  
 forgive me this once; And if ever I need, I  
 shall come to thee again. Providing always that  
 the Grace of God be not turned into wantonness,  
 nor this our liberty used for an occasion to sin.

Now for confirmation of what hath been said in  
 this consideration, I shall apply my self briefly to  
 two places of Scripture. The first is *Psal 137*,  
 where I observe these things from the whole tenor  
 of the *Psalms*. 1. A saint's case may be right odd,  
 and in many things without a match, *but I am a*  
*worme and no man, a reproach of men &c.* 2. I see  
 in afflicted Saints a strong inclination to aggravate  
 their own case, and to reason themselves out of  
 case, with a sort of pleasure, *verse 4.* *Our Fathers*  
*trusted in thee, and thou deliveredst them;* but I am  
 not like other men, *I am a worme and no man*, the  
 very language of dejected Spirits to this day. 3.  
 I see, that when they have reasoned themselves  
 never so far out of account, beyond all example  
 or match of case Parrallel, there is yet some fur-  
 ther ground, for the faith of the desolate Soull to  
 travel upon, in its search for discoveries of light and  
 comfort, for we see how he goes on complaining,  
 search-

searching, believing, and Praying till he arrive at Praise, which ever lyes at the far end of the darkest Wilderness that a Saint can go thorow: for when a Saint is in the thickest darkness and under the greatest damps, there is still *aliquid ultra*, something before them; and that is, "light for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. 4. I see that a humble well tamed Soul will stoop right low to lift up such grounds of hope and encouragement, as to a Soul that is lifted up might seem but slender and mean: *thou tookest me from my mothers belly, and caused me to hope upon the breasts.* A humble faith will winn its meat amongst other folks feet, and when all examples fail such, they will find an example in themselves furnishing them with matter of hope. 5. I see there may be extant signal and manifest evidences of Gods kindness to his People in former times, and in cases as pressing as the present; the Memory whereof, for a long time may be darkned with the prevailing sense of incumbent pressures. *verse 21. save me from the Lyons mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.* 6. Though all Parallels and matching examples of other mens cases fail a Saint; yet to him it is sufficient ground of Faith and matter of Praise, that his own case hath been helped, when once it hath been as ill as now it is, *thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns;* and therefore I will declare thy name amongst my brethren, in the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee. 7. If there must be examples of leading cases, if so I may call them, then some must be the

example by being first in that case: And thus oftentimes, he that finds no Parallel before him, leaves one behind him: And indeed we should be as well content, if so the will of God be, to be examples to others of suffering affliction and enduring tentations, as to have examples of others. Therefore sayes he, verse 27. *All the ends of the World shall remember this,* and in the last verse, *They shall declare to the people that shall be to come, that he hath done this.*

The 2<sup>d</sup> place of Scripture I direct my thoughts to is *Job. 5. 8, 9.* *Job's* case was clearly unparallel'd and absolutely matchless: And sayes *Eliphaz the Temanite,* *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.* And that he might do that upon good ground, he shewes in the 9<sup>th</sup> verse, for (sayes he) *God doth great things.* Why, sayes the Soul, mine is a great case, then he doth great things; Why, I know what he doth: No, neither thou nor all the World knows that, nor can find it out for *he doth unsearchable things.* Whether that he is a God that cannot be known, be a greater mercy, or that he is an unknown God be to us a greater misery, is that which I know not: but this I know well, that more of the knowledge of God, and larger thoughts of him would loose many a knot, and answer many a perplexing case, to his People. Yea, but sayes the Soul, it shall be a wonder, a very miracle if ever my case mend; Why, then sayes *Eliphaz,* *he doth marvelous things.* Yea but God's wonders are not his every-dayes work; but they are a few rare pieces of his kindness shewed to eminent

eminent Saints, and great favourites, And we are not obliged to expect wonders: Yet, I hope you are obliged to believe Gods word, that he doth such things, and those too *without number*; and you are obliged to obey Gods voice, to look unto him, and unto him to commit your cause, and you are obliged to give God his own latitude, and as well not to limit him if he will do wonders, as not to tempt him to wait for wonders: And *Psal. 88. 10. wilt thou shew wonders to the dead* makes it clear, that God will turn the course of nature upside down, and make the World Red as we see *Psal. 18.* at length, And will do wonders to purpose, that even the dead shall be witnesses of, before that his beloved be not delivered. Now to descend into the particular grounds of the cures of Saints cases, were to go through all the Attributes of God, all the offices of Christ, all the promises of the Gospel, and Articles of the Covenant of Grace, which are the substantial Linaments of that well contrived piece the Word of God, which is so well illumined with the lively colours of examples sufficient, and those so well mixed and so justly distinguished, one having what another wants, and the other having what it wanted, and wanting what it had, that it speaks the finger of God to have done it, and leaves a defiance to nature and Art once to come near it.

In the Fourth place I offer this to be considered by the Soul distempered, that is like to fall unkind with the Word of God, thorow an apprehension That all the threatnings of the Word are directly

gainst

ainst it. That all the most peremptory and se-  
vere threatnings of the Word are to be understood  
and qualified with the exception of Repentance.  
This is clear, 1. from Christs express Word.  
*Mat. 13. 3. 5. except ye repent ye shall all perish.*  
2. from the account of events wherein we see  
that the most peremptory threatnings have been  
verted, and their execution prevented by Re-  
pentance: witness, with many others, the cases  
of *Hezekiah* and the *Ninevites*. 3. From the  
hortations and Exhortations annexed to  
threatnings, with a Solemn Declaration of the  
ords Gracious dislike of mens Misery, whereof  
Scripture is full. In a word, the humble peni-  
t is worse Feared, than hurt with threatnings.  
and even as a plentiful rain quenches thunders, al-  
ways the violence of Storms and Tempests, and  
both tempers and calms the Air; So the Tears of  
godly Repentance, compose the Thunder-and  
leather-beaten Soul that is tossed with the Tem-  
pests of Thundering threatnings. In the 31. Psalm,  
there was a great Storme in *David's* Conscience. *He*  
*wept all day long; &c.* But a free work of sincere  
repentance Calmes all, and leavs the Soul quiet  
and serene: *David* takes a House upon his head,  
he refuges himself in God by faith, and then let it  
be the unhappiest, *Thou art my hiding place, thou*  
*shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass*  
*me about with Songs of deliverance Selah. Verse 7.*  
By this time, I hope, it doth in some measure  
appear, that the Scriptures are not wanting, in the  
performance of all offices of kindness, that can  
be rational-

Rationally be required in the most unpromising case. And that they are much to be blamed who upon any of the foresaid pretences would pick quarrels against the Scriptures. But such deal not fairly: neither are their wayes equal: and I may well say to them, is this your kindness to your friends? surely the Scriptures have not deserved any such service of your hands,

*By Greshams  
directions for  
reading the  
Scriptures.*

Now to the Soul that would keep up kindness with the Scriptures, and so would be mighty in the Scriptures I leave these Directions in these words.

1. Acquaint thy self with the whole Scripture and all Scripture both in its letter and meaning for that is to know the Scriptures: Otherways it is but an unknown Tongue to him that is unacquainted either with the phrase or meaning of it. The Soul that is thus acquainted with all Scriptures, if one Scripture bind it, another will loose it: if one wound it, another will heal it: if one cast it down, another will comfort it.

2. Be a careful keeper of the word of God in practice. David felt, and every Soul that has their Senses exercised will feel their Affection to and proficiency in the Scriptures grow according to their practice of the Scriptures. *Psal. 119.* *This I had because I kept thy Precepts,* And Christ teacheth plainly, that he that is a doer of the will of God, is fairesst to know the Doctrine that is of God. I know no such way to be a good Scholar, as to be a good Christian.



## THE PREFACE.

3. Intertain the Spirit of God, if you would  
 have either comfort or profit of the word: *And so*  
 1. the Spirit and the Word are promised together:  
*John 6. 63.* Christ tells us that *his Words are spirit*  
*and life.* 1 Cor. 2, 10. and foreward, it is the Spi-  
 rit that doth all by the Word: and 1. *John 2, 27.*  
*It is the anointing that teacheth all things.* One  
 mayes well of *Paul's* Epistles that no man can under-  
 stand them without *Paul's* Spirit: And so may be  
 said of all Scripture. Sight is as needful as light,  
 as blind men might judge of Colours: And if the  
 Spirit were not as needful as the Word of Faith,  
 then blind sense and hasty unbelief would not  
 stand to say that all men are Lyars, and that God's  
 Truth failes for ever. The material Doctrines  
 and objective Revelations of the Word and Spirit  
 are ever the same: And a Spirit clashing with the  
 Word, is surely a Ghost and an evil Spirit. But  
 the Word and Spirit in the conveyance and delive-  
 ry of the self-same Revelations, are oftentimes sepa-  
 rate in their influences: for sometimes the Word  
 comes alone without the Spirit to those who have  
 eyes and see not. &c. Sometimes again the Spirit  
 comes with a discovery of the same Truth that  
 is in the Word without the help of the Word, as  
 Infants, deaf Persons, and even others at age  
 and having the use of their ears; but being not  
 well versed in the Scriptures, yet desiring to  
 know and do the will of God, are oftentimes, no  
 doubt, by a secret immediate instinct of the Spirit,  
 God, without the actual remembrance and  
 help of the Word of God, taught and instructed

according to the Word: for God leads the blind by a way that they know not. And the Apostle 1 Per: 3. 1. tells us, that some men at age, by good example may be won without the Word. Why then may not the Spirit of God do, what that example of a Christian woman can do? But that it concerns all that would converse comfortably with the Scriptures, to call the Spirit of God to their assistance is manifest from this, That there are many, and those the most concerning Questions, that fall under a Christians Cognition to be resolved according to the Word of God, which are determinable only by the Spirit of God: even all these that may most deservedly be called *things of a man*, which none knows, and therefore cannot competently judge of, but the Spirit of God that knoweth all things, and the Spirit of the man, and that not either without a special presence and assistance of the Spirit of God: Nay, when you should convene about these Questions a Council or General Assembly, of the learnedst Doctours or ablest Divines in Christendome, they could not define them: Such are the Questions of a Mans personal interest in God, and his state toward Godly whether a man have the Spirit and be born of God again and the like. They may give evidences of these things in the general, and indefinitely, which may be as *media* to conclude upon, and which they may frame into universal propositions, that he who hath these evidences is of God &c. But to subsume those propositions, and from these premisses to conclude particularly, belongs only to the Spirit.

blind God witnessing with our Spirits that we are  
 possible Children of God: for by the Spirit we know  
 e, the things that are freely given us of God. The  
 Work is to be said of many particular matters of fact  
 at that concern a man. I instance in one, but it is a  
 the main on. The nature of the sin against the Holy  
 Ghost, I find the best advised Divines very warry  
 (as they have Reason) to determine in: and yet  
 the more awar of personal application of their deter-  
 minationss, because of latent circumstances impos-  
 sible to be infallibly reached and discerned by any  
 which an in his neighbour. Now whether is my sin  
 against the Holy Ghost? is a Question so puzz-  
 ling and perplexing oft times (some know what I  
 mean) even to such as are dear to God, that it passes  
 the reach of all created wisdom to ridd their doubt.  
 I will let me say only by the way, there is no more  
 compendious method in the World, to draw or  
 rather to drive a man to the sin against the Holy  
 Ghost, than the apprehension that he hath already  
 committed that sin: for that apprehension renders him  
 desperat, and what will not a desperat man do?  
 Cunning Devil! But O wiser God! that gives sub-  
 dity to the simple, and makes them able to stand  
 against the wyles of Satan. But how is the Questi-  
 on ridd? I answer, the Spirit of God rids it thus,  
 according to the Scripture: That surely is not  
 the sin against the Holy Ghost, whereof a man re-  
 penteth. Now when the Soul is at its wits end,  
 and ready to sink, the Spirit of God sendeth such  
 comfort, into the Soul of the sinner, of Godly for-  
 spon unto repentance, for that sin whereof he was

so jealous, and the Soul of him so joyes in his sorrow, and sorrows with his joy (*de peccato doli, & de dolore gaudet*) that he cannot be satisfied nor get his fill of that Godly sorrow, which is so warme with love, and so wet with tears, that except a man that is wet to the Skin should desire that he has gotten the showre, he cannot deny but he repents of that sin: And then sure he is not a sinner against the Holy Ghost, For it is impossible for to renew such an one to Repentance. I do not here mean, that only an overflowing power of Repentance, such as I have spoken of, is a cure for the case: no; for the very desire of Repentance vindicates a man from any fear of this sin, (because for a sinner against the Holy Ghost, so sins and so abuses his lights to sin that sin, that he would not do otherwise, if it were in his choise.) But when Ignorant Soules perplexities about this question are overwhelming, then it is fit that they be cured with this measure of Repentance that is so overflowing. I marked before, and I mind it again, as good Showrs calme and clear the Air, so much Repentance it clears many doubts, resolves many Cases, rids the Soul from many perplexities, and settles it in a sweet calme and serenity.

The Fourth Direction I give to those that would keep so in with the Scriptures, as to make use of them with comfort and profit is this, that they despise not the Discipline of tentations. Both our learned Christians and Divines are not the bold Scholars: but they that would be taught the word Series and Acroamatics of Religion and Divinity in

in must be *Luther's* Condisciples; and he was bred  
 into the School of Tentations: he confessed, that  
 his tentations had learned him more of the Go-  
 spel than all his books had done. This School  
 of tentations is of an old erection: and (not to  
 speak of others) here our Lord Jesus took all his  
 Degrees. Hence he was commenced Master of  
 his experiences, and Doctor universal in all cases:  
*for in that he suffered being tempted, he is able also*  
*to help those that are tempted: and in all things he*  
*was tempted as we are,* that he might succour their  
 infirmities that are tempted. *- Heb. 2. 17, 18. and 4. 15.*  
 And as his temptations accomplished him highly,  
 for the rest of his Mediatory Work, so parti-  
 cularly and especially for the Ministry: these were  
 his Tryalls for the Ministry, *Matth. 4. at the be-*  
*ginning, he is tempted,* and in the 17 verse, *from*  
*that time Jesus began to Preach.* Wherefore let Mi-  
 nisters remember, that if they be tempted, the  
 Lord is giving them the highest point of breed-  
 ing for their employment. But *blest is the man*  
*that endureth temptation (or bides out the Tryal)*  
*for when he is tryed, he shall receive the Crown of*  
*life which the Lord hath promised to them that love*  
*him.* James 1, 12. Now having thus spoken at  
 length to the Commendation of Scripture what  
 excellent uses it serves to in all cases, and what  
 kind Offices it performes to the People of God  
 in every condition, Let us for Conclusion be-  
 hold how it shewes to us the kindness of the  
 Lord, in that *Jethro-like* it comes to visit  
 us in the Wilderness; And let us hearken what it  
 will say to us there: For there we are.

Text

so jealous, and the Soul of him so joyes in his sorrow, and sorrows with his joy (*de peccato gaudet, & de dolore gaudet*) that he cannot be satisfied nor get his fill of that Godly sorrow, which is so warme with love, and so wet with tears, except a man that is wet to the Skin should despise that he has gotten the showre, he cannot deny he repents of that sin: And then sure he is no sinner against the Holy Ghost, For it is impossible for to renew such an one to Repentance. I do not here mean, that only an overflowing power of Repentance, such as I have spoken of, is a cure for the case: no; for the very desire of Repentance vindicates a man from any fear of this sin, (because for a sinner against the Holy Ghost, so sins and so multiplies lights to sin that sin, that he would not do to his wife, if it were in his choice.) But when Ignorance and Soules perplexities about this question are overwhelming, then it is fit that they be cured with this measure of Repentance that is so overflowing. I marked before, and I mind it again, as going Showrs calme and clear the Air, so much Repentance it clears many doubts, resolves many Cases, rids the Soul from many perplexities, and settles it in a sweet calme and serenity.

The Fourth Direction I give to those that would keep so in with the Scriptures, as to make use of them with comfort and profit is this, that they despise not the Discipline of temptations. Both learned Christians and Divines are not the bold Scholars: but they that would be taught the series and Acroamatics of Religion and Divinity in

in must be *Luther's* Condisciples; and he was bred  
 at the School of Tentations: he confessed, that  
 his tentations had learned him more of the Go-  
 spel than all his books had done. This School  
 of tentations is of an old erection: and (not to  
 speak of others) here our Lord Jesus took all his  
 Degrees. Hence he was commenced Master of  
 experiences, and Doctor universal in all cases:  
*for in that he suffered being tempted, he is able also*  
*to help those that are tempted: and in all things he*  
*was tempted as we are,* that he might succour them  
 that are tempted. - *Heb. 2. 17, 18. and 4. 15.*  
 And as his temptations accomplished him highly,  
 for the rest of his Mediatory Work, so parti-  
 cularly and especially for the Ministry: these were  
 his Tryalls for the Ministry, *Matth. 4.* at the be-  
 ginning, *he is tempted,* and in the 17 verse, *from*  
*that time Jesus began to Preach.* Wherefore let Mi-  
 nisters remember, that if they be tempted, the  
 Lord is giving them the highest point of breed-  
 ing for their employment. But *blessed is the man*  
*that endureth temptation (or bides out the Tryal)*  
*for when he is tryed, he shall receive the Crown of*  
*life which the Lord hath promised to them that love*  
*him.* James 1, 12. Now having thus spoken at  
 length to the Commendation of Scripture what  
 excellent uses it serves to in all cases, and what  
 kind Offices it performes to the People of God  
 in every condition, Let us for Conclusion be-  
 hold how it shewes to us the kindness of the  
 Lord, in that *Jeshro-like* it comes to visit  
 us in the Wilderness; And let us hearken what it  
 will say to us there: For there we are. Text

Ib

h

a

z

IT

V

I.

his

tion

stio

Chu

por

nd

s

arr

cre



Text Hosea 2. 14.

Therefore behold, I will allure  
her and bring her into the Wil-  
derness, and speak comfortably  
unto her.

INTRODUCTION.

**W**E have in the contexture of this  
Chapter, a solemn confirmation  
of three great Truths, that are  
noted in the Scripture of Truth.

1. *That the Lord will not cast off his People, nor forsake  
his Inheritance*, Psal. 94. 14. Which general asser-  
tion it will be fit to clear in these particular Propo-  
sitions. 1. God will never cast off the universal  
Church, nor leave himself destitute of a People  
upon the Earth, who may owne him and his Truth,  
and may hold forth the Word of Life, shining  
Lights in the World, being blameless and  
harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse ge-  
neration. Thus in our Creed, *We believe a Church*

Uni-

*Universal*, which sometimes is cloathed in Scarlet, and sometime again is set upon the Dringhill: Sometimes is courted of the multitude in the City, and sometimes is persecuted and driven to the Wilderness: Sometimes is more visible and glorious, in the Incorporated Societies of National Churches, sometimes more latent and obscure in some few single persons scattered up and down in the World; who, it may be, in their time, are as little observed by the World, as the seven thousand true Worshipers were by *Elia* in his time. There is a time, *Prov.* 28. 12. when a man is hidden: And the Lord in the worst of times hath his hidden ones, *Psal.* 83. 3. And when judgements returns unto righteousness, all the upright in Heart will follow after it, *Psal.* 94. 15.

2. God may utterly reject and totally cast off the visible Body of a particular Church: Witness the Church of the Jews at this day, and the seven ancient Churches of *Asia*.

3. God may sentimentally reject his People by Threatnings, when he doth it not, nor minds to do it eventually and effectually in his Dispensations. God may lift up his Hand against his People to overthrow them, and he may say by his threatening, *That he will destroy them*, as it is *Psal.* 106. 23. 26. When yet they are spared: he may frame a Bill of Divorce against his Church but not give it her into her hand, *Zeph.* 2. 2. The Decree, or the threatening intimating the Decree is one thing, and the bringing forth of the Decree, or the execution of that Threatning is another thing.

thing. Repentance will obtain both a Suspension and Repeal of a Sentence of rejection. In a word, God may cast out with his people, and not cast them off for all that: He may Censure them within doors, when he minds not to put them to the door: The Lord may say, he cannot owne a Whore, and yet he is Married to her: and he threatens to cast off a Whore, that so he may keep still an honest Woman.

4. God may really and effectually cast out his People, when yet he doth not cast them off: A Whore may be put to the door and taken home again, *Jer. 3. 1.* A Leprous *Miriam* may be put out of the Camp and taken in again: God may not only say by his threatnings, but seem to confirm it by his Dispensations, that his People are outcasts, and yet *He gathers the out-casts of Israel, Psal. 147. 2.* The Lord hath oft times in his Dispensations shewed himself to his People, testifying his Displeasures against them; that even those who were more than common Counsellors with God, and were best acquaint with his wayes have had right sad apprehensions of total off-casting, *Jer. 14. 19.* *Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Psal. 83. 3, 6.* *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all Generations? Wilt thou not relent again that thy people may rejoyce in thee? And yet in the 9th verse (and O! if this were the answer for the Mourners and inquirers in Scotland,) his salvation is near them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our land.* So that there are three very different things, 1. Gods casting out with his People

## 34 / INTRODUCTION:

People. 2. His casting out his People. And 3. his casting his People off.

5. God may reject one Generation of a Church or Nation, as a Generation of his wrath, and yet his Covenant stand with the same Nation or Church: Witness that Generation with whom the Lord's Spirit was grieved fourty years, and whose Carcases fell in the Wilderness.

6. God may cast off the Incorporation of a Church or Nation, whereof sometimes he reserves a remnant to whom he will be gracious, and with whom he will establish his Covenant, *Paul Rom. 11* at the beginning shews, that be with *Israel* as it will, *God will not cast off his own Elect*, such as he himself was. And *Rom. 9. 27*: though a number like the sand of the Sea be destroyed, *Yet a remnant shall be saved*, as saith *Isaiah* chap. 1, vers. 9. And that is the grand consolation, when all goes to all, *That of all that the Father hath given him, Christ will lose none*, *Joh. 6. 39*. A Son of perdition when he meets with a temptation may go from Christ's very elbow, both to Hell and the Halter at once: \* But however such may be lent to Christ to make use of in a common Service for a time; yet certain it is, that they have never been given to him for Salvation. But yet *God is good to Israel. Psal. 73. 1*.

But here two distinctions are fit to be remembered, The 1. is *Paul's* distinction *Rom. 9. 6*. between *Israel* and those that are of *Israel*. Common Professors, Carnal Hypocrites and unbelievers may expect little mercy in a time of publick off- casting of a Church or Nation. The 2d distinction

# INTRODUCTION.

3. on is *Hosea's* in this *Chapter*, betwixt the Children of  
 a Whore and the Children of her Whoredoms. This  
 Whorish Church had lawfully begotten Children  
 and *Ammi* and *Ruchamah*, to whom the Prophet, who  
 on likewise himself was one, and a brother of those  
 in Children, is commanded to apply himself, and  
 of these there were few in that time of publick  
 Apostacy. But then in the 4th verse of this *Chap-*  
 of a ter there are the ill begotten Children of her  
 re. Whoredoms, whose names in the 1 *Chapter* were  
 and called *Loammis* and *Loruchamah*, and these were  
 and many. The Children of Whoredoms are those  
 who comply in judgment or practice with the  
 as common course of a Churches Apostacy, whose  
 per Faith and Principles (if they have any) are not  
 ant the fruit of the immortall seed of the incorrupted  
 in Word of God; but of the inventions and Com-  
 all, mandments of men, or the delusions and impo-  
 sible stures of *Satan*, which their Adulterous Mother, the  
 he Church that so breeds them, (who is damned for  
 ery that she hath forsaken her first faith) is so fond  
 But of. If a Woman be a gaudy, light Person, it may  
 e of readily render her Children suspected: but if she be  
 it is, an arrand notorious Whore, then it is too likely,  
 for and in the case of Religion, it is almost necessary  
 . 1. and certain, that *si Mater Meretrix, Filia talis erit.*  
 per. If the mother be a Whore, the Daughter will be  
 be such also, and so the Proverb shall be fulfilled  
 non *Ezek. 16. 44. As is the Mother so is the Daughter.*  
 ven Papists breed their Children Papists, and other  
 off-Folk breed their Children such as they them-  
 selves are, and few Children make their Fathers  
 Religion

Religion better: and therefore sad is the case of young ones that fall into corrupt times: and sad is the condition of these times wherein young ones are bred corrupt. There is little appearance, if Sovereign goodness interpose not, that they shall soon be better: Because a person ordinarily persists in those Principles wherewith they have been first possessed by education: for Solomon tells us that *whatsoever may a Child is trained up in, he will not depart from it when he is old*: and, *quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu*. A new vessel will keep the first scent long. But moreover there is real ground of fear, that such times shall still grow worse and worse: for evil beginnings have worse proceedings, *they proceed* (saith the Prophet) *from evil to worse*; Jer. 9, 3. And *evil men and seducers*, saith the Apostle, *proceed and wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*. 1 Timoth. 3. 13. *I bid me and was worse*, saith the Lord. Isai. 57, 17. *And he went on forwardly in the way of his heart*: And what shall the end be? and where will they stand? if the Lord say not that also which followes in the 18. verse, *I have seen his misery, and I will heal him*. Prelacy will breed Popery to which it naturally inclines. Profaneness will make a straight path to Athesism and Barbarity. Ignorance will nourish superstition. Formality, Indifferency, Looseness, Lightness, and Luxuri-  
 ancye of wanton-witted Preachers especially (but God be thanked, their skill is not so good as their will, nor their wit so great as their wantonness, and they are like evil favoured old Whores out

of ease to do worse ; and therefore they must entertain their paramours with painting for beauty, and complement for courtesie ) will foster Heresy. Ceremonies straight way will learn to say Mass ; and then *καὶ οὕτως*, Lord help it. But the other sort of Children that are the *Children of the Whore*, yet not of her Whoredoms, but of her Marriage bed, are these whose Faith is the off-spring of that first Faith of the Apostat Church, and that unsported chaste Religion which she professed, before she forsook her first Faith and brake her Covenant of Marriage ; and who owne their righteous Father, whom their Whorish Mother hath dishonoured and forsaken, and who with grief and shame, make mention of the lewdness of their Mother, who mourn for her back-slidings, and plead ( as here in the 2d verse they are commanded ) for the honour and right of their Father. With these it shall not fare worse for their Mothers cause, for they are fellow sufferers of reproach with their Father, and they bear his name : nor will he deny his interest in them, they are *Ammi*, nor yet will he refuse them Fatherly kindness and Duty, they are *Rubamah* to him : And though their base Mother by Adulterating her Faith doth forfeit her dowry of the priviledges of a true Church, yet their Righteous Father will find himself obliged by their Mothers Marriage Covenant and contract, to give them the Inheritance of lawfully begotten Children : and they shall be kept and brought up in his House, when she shall be sent off to call her Lovers *Baals*, with her Adulterous

Brat

Brats at her foot, who cry Father to *Balaam*. If we might insist, this consideration would clear the case well betwixt us and the *Papish Church*: But to speak to a purpose nearer us, If our Mother will *Débord*, let us tell her of it, and plead with her: If that cannot help it, let us be sorry for it. But let us not in any thing be partakers with her *Adulteries*; lest we be thought *Bastards*: Let us owne our Father, and Study to be like him, even to be living Pictures of his Divine Nature, that so it may be out of all question that we are his own lawfully begotten Children, when we *Bear his Name upon our Foreheads*, Rev. 22. 4. and that is *Holiness to the Lord*, Zach. 14. 20. Now these are they, even these who study sound Faith, and sincere Holiness, that go the World as it will, and let Gods Dispensations and their own apprehensions say what they will, shall never be forsaken nor cast off of God, Psal. 9. 10. *Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee*: Psal. 37. 25. *David* in his old Age who had seen many things in his time; Yet never had he seen the Righteous forsaken. Joh. 6. 37. *Him that cometh to me, sayeth Christ, I will in no wise cast out*, Heb. 13. 5. the Lord hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*.

II. The Second grand Scripture Truth that is confirmed so solemnly in the context of this Scripture, is, That *all the wayes of the Lord to his People are mercy and truth*, Psal. 25. 0. We see in the former part of this Chapter, in the 8th. verse, so long as he obeys and serves God, what kindness he sheweth



# INTRODUCTION.

39

If he, he lets her want for nothing: And though  
 that most shamefully plays the wanton under all  
 But at Mercy, yet long he forbears her, and is still  
 cherishing her, till she begins insolently to reflect up-  
 on the Lord, and to speak more kindly of her  
 lovers than of him: Then the Lord, as one that  
 cannot endure to be so far disparaged, as to have  
 said that there is any Service or Fellowship so  
 good as his, finds it now time that she be taught,  
 that she can no where do so well as with her own  
 Husband: And this she must learn in the *Wilder-*  
*ness*, where he remembers mercy in the midst of  
 his wrath, and as it were forgets what he had even  
 now been saying, and from threatening falls a com-  
 mending and alluring of her, and there interstains  
 with the most convincing expressions of Love  
 and Respects. And we may mark especially in  
 the Text proposed, how the Lord loves not to tell  
 his people ill News, and that he desires, in a  
 pleasant manner, to tyne his threatnings in the telling, if  
 it could be for his Peoples good; or, at least to  
 tell them so cannily and convey them so artificial-  
 ly, and as it were, insensibly, and by the by;  
 and withall to drop them out so sparingly, as that  
 they may neither hinder nor hide his great design  
 of love and alluring Mercy. *I will allure her, and*  
*bring her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably*  
*unto her*: And when the Lord hath gained his great  
 design and hath once won the Heart of her, then  
 he allows mercy upon mercy, and promise upon  
 promise to the end of the *Chapter*; where he de-  
 clares that he will betroath her unto himself for

H

to love her ever

ever in Faithfulness, and that there shall be  
 thing but inviolable kindness betwixt them in  
 time coming. The Lords Threatnings, Frowns  
 and Chastening Rods, are all necessary Mercies  
 advancing the great Mercy of God's People in  
 nearer Injoyment of himself: And that which  
 its own nature, and at sometime is mercy, at  
 another time to such a person were no mercy, or  
 cruel Mercy, such as are the tender Mercies of  
 the wicked. But God will not shew wicked  
 Mercies, ~~cruel Mercies~~ to his People. I com-  
 pare the mercy of God to his People, in all  
 wayes, to a white threed in a Web, run-  
 ning through many dark colours. A child, or  
 that knows no better, will readily think at  
 disappearing of the white, that there is no white  
 there: But when they look to the inner-side, they  
 find the white appearing there that was interrupted  
 and lost, as they thought on the other side. Even  
 so the mercy of the Lord, which indueth  
 ever to his People, runneth uninterruptedly along  
 all his dispensations to them; and if they point  
 any black part of the web, and ask, where  
 your white threed now? if they pitch upon  
 sad dispensation of Providence, and ask, what  
 mercy is here? I will bid them, look to the inner-side  
 for we must *not judge by appearance, but we must  
 judge righteous Judgments.* There is a disappearing  
 white threed of mercy on the inner-side of all  
 blackest and most afflicting lots of Saints, and  
 any have not the faith to believe this in an hour  
 and power of darkness, yet I shall wish them to be

## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

patience to wait, till they see the white thread  
 again in its own place, and till they find un-  
 denyable mercy, that will not suffer it self to be  
 mistaken, tryst them upon the borders of that  
 dark valley: for *mercy follows them all the days of their*  
*life Psal. 23. 6. and sometimes it will compass them*  
*round about Psal. 32. 10.* In a word all the very  
 outfallings that are betwixt God and his People,  
 they are *amantium ira* that is but *amoris redintegratio*,  
 lovers cast out and agree again, and they cast not  
 out but that they may agree again: and so are God  
 and his People, mercy shall conclude all that passes  
 betwixt them: and that mercy is joyned with  
 truth: for God hath said it, and he was never yet  
 worse than his word to any; but to many  
 very oft much better. You see here (which  
 confirms the point not a little) what a wilde  
 piece she is, to whom the Lord does all this,  
 neither minding God nor his Covenant nor Com-  
 mandments; but courting her lovers and follow-  
 ing her lightness: and yet the Lord pursues her,  
 might and little worth as she is, courts her, and in-  
 vites her to come home. All this is strange, and  
 yet all this is but like God, that the *Holy One of*  
*Israel* should thus like the *Adulteress* Judah's friend  
*Gen. 38.* go to seek a Harlot by the way side,  
 But consider. 1. That when the Lord Married  
 her, he knew all the faults that followed her, and  
 took her with them all. If God had not known  
 before what she would prove, it might be strange  
 that thus he suits her: but if there be any thing  
 to be admired here, it is his first love to her whom

he knew to be such an one. But *2dly* considering where will the Lord do better? Where is there any in the World that without his own undertaking would serve him otherways? And therefore till the Lord find a better match, he thinks (and with all reason) even as good hold him as his first choice: Especially since *3.* He knows a way how to gain her: And *4.* sees her already renewing her courses, and saying that she will return to her first husband. And by all this *5.* he will let it be seen that he is not so unstable and light as she is. She could find in her heart to entertain others in his place, and surely she was not ill to please, that could take an Idol in his room: but yet he will make it manifest to all the World, that *he is God and changes not*; and therefore he will maintain his old kindness to her, and will remember the love of her espousals, and the kindnesses of her youth: For *6.* Foolish as she was, he had gotten more love of her in former times, than he had gotten of all the World besides. And thus the very case stands betwixt God and his debauching Children and backsliding People unto this day.

*III* The *third* great Scripture truth that is here solemnly confirmed is this, That *Gods way with his People is not the manner of men.* 2 Sam. 7, 19. Hosea 6, 7. *They like men transgress the Covenant* and Chap. 11. 9. *He like God and like himself* (and there is none like unto him: for if any were like him, he were not himself) *will not count the fierceness of his anger, nor return to destroy them; because he is God and not man,* Jer. 3, 1. *Thou:*

# INTRODUCTION

43

Consider if a man put away his wife, and she go from him and  
 then come another man, Shall he return unto her again?  
 Will not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast  
 defiled the Harlot with many lovers, yet return again  
 unto me saith the Lord. Now that Gods way with  
 his People, is not the manner of men, warrands  
 us to expect from him things not ordinary:  
 ready it was the greatnes of his extraordinary kind-  
 ness to David that made him say so of God: yea  
 warrands them to expect above expectation. *Isai.*  
*ht 4. 3. Thou didst terrible things that we looked not*  
*for. Yea more, it even warrands them to expect*  
*above admiration. Zech. 8. 6. If it be marvelous*  
*in the eyes of the remnant of this People in these dayes;*  
*shall it also be marvelous in my eyes, saith the Lord of*  
*Hosts? And the Ground of all is Isai. 55, 9. Be-*  
*cause as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are*  
*my ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts*  
*higher than our thoughts. This is solemnly confirmed in*  
 the Text proposed: where we have such a stupen-  
 dous strange inference, a Therefore that ( consider-  
 ing what hath been last laid ) all the World cannot  
 tell Wherefore: a Therefore, that if it had been left  
 to all the World to supply what follows it, confi-  
 dering what hath immediatly gone before, I doubt  
 it could have entered into any created heart to  
 have once guessed it. *She went after her lovers*  
*and forgot me saith the Lord, and therefore I will al-*  
*low her to be here and comfort her. To this Therefore is well*  
 subjoined, Behold, which oblation teacheth  
 admiration of what we cannot reach to satisfi-  
 fy: Only, from all this, let us consider, whether

## INTRODUCTION

the great sin of limiting God be not too ordinary, and too little abhorred an evil amongst us. We frame to our fancy a little modest God forsooth that must not take too much upon him: and by those fancies we model our Prayers, and returns and pardons of sin, and accounts of Providences and events of dispensations, and all things. And if that be not to have another God before the true God, I have not read my Bible right, nor do I understand the first Commandment. But now after that I have wandered so long before, though I hope, not beside the purpose, I am yet but entering the *Wilderness*.

SER.

# S E R M O N

Hosea 2: 14.

*Therefore behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderness, and speak Comfortably unto her:*

A Wilderness is a land of darkness Jer. 2: 21. and whilst I but look into the Wilderness, I am surrounded with the darkness of a mysterious transition in the particle *Therefore*. But when I begin to enter, and while my foot standeth even upon the borders of darkness, I see a light shining out of darkness, *Psal. 119. 130. the enterance of thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple.* This lights me over the border. where being come, I hear a voice which bids me *Behold*, and beholding I see a strange *Wherefore*, of this strange *Therefore*, and it is this, that by any means the Lord must have his People's heart, and be sole owner of their love without a Rival or partner.

In the close of the former verse, *she forgetteth* the Lord: that *I cannot suffer*, and therefore *will allure her*, *Behold I will allure her*. She forgot me and could not tell wherefor, except it was for my indulgence, and that I spilt her with too much kindness; as it is written *for my love they are my enemies*. And I will pursue her love, and follow her for her heart. I will allure her, and I will tell her wherefore not: *Not for your sakes doth this saith the Lord God*, be it known unto you; *Be ashamed and be confounded for your own ways*, O house of Israel. Ezek. 36, 32. But I will not tell her wherefore, but so it must be: therefore I will allure her, and if my former kindness and indulgence was a fault; (for *the Prosperity of fools destroyes them*, Prov. 1. 32.) that shall be mended: *I will bring her into the Wilderness*; For she is so wild that I must tye her before I win her: *I must kill her, before I make her alive*: I must loose her, before I find her: *I must cast her down before I comfort her*; *And therefore I will bring her into the Wilderness*; and *I will speak comfortably unto her*. All this we are *willed to Behold*. Therefore *Behold*, &c.

In the words then we have these four things distinctly to be considered. 1. The Note of observation *Behold*. 2, The intimation of the Churches condition, *I will bring her into the Wilderness*. 3. The Lords great design upon his Church in this and all his Dispensations to her, *I will allure her*, which rules all the vicissitudes of her divers Lots, as means depending in a due Subordination.



# SERMON on Hosea 2. 14

ination upon this high end, whereinto they are  
 all to be resolved, as into the last cause and reason.  
 This great design of God upon his People, is as  
 the Principles and fundamental propositions of  
 sciences, which prove all particular conclusions,  
 whilst themselves only remain unproven by in-  
 ference, as being received by evidence, of all that  
 are but acquaint with the terms. For if it be asked,  
 wherefore God will afflict his Church and bring  
 her into the Wilderness? The answer is, because  
 he will allure her: And wherefore will he com-  
 fort her? Because he will allure her; He must  
 have her heart as I said before. But if it be asked,  
 and wherefore will he allure her? What sees he in  
 her, That thus he should Court her for her Kind-  
 ness? That must answer it self, that is the there-  
 fore that hath no wherefore, but. *Even so Lord, for  
 so it pleases thee!* 4. I shall consider the juncture  
 and coincidence of her Afflictions and his Conso-  
 lations; *I will bring her into the Wilderness and speak  
 comfortably unto her.*

*Therefore behold.*

FROM the first thing then, the Note of Obser-  
 vation we have this Doctrine, That it is our  
 Duty (and a weighty one) well to consider the Lords  
 ways with his People and his Works towards them.  
*Therefore behold.* &c. When God biddeth behold, it  
 is sure we shall have something worth the con-  
 sidering. Now that this is a concerning Duty, it  
 is chiefly to observe the Lords works and ways to-  
 wards

wards his People, is confirmed By these three things  
 from the Scripture. The 1. is, Scripture Com-  
 mands to this purpose, such as the many *Behold*  
 that the Lord either prefixes or annexes to his  
 works, whereof we have one in this place; and  
*Psal. 37. 37.* We are commanded to *mark and be-  
 hold the end both of the upright and of the transgress-*  
*ors.* And to the head of commands (because I for-  
 love not to multiply things without great necessi-  
 ty) I refer all these things that are proper perti-  
 nents and pendicles of a command. 1. *Exhortations*  
*one, such as Jer. 2. 31. O generation see ye the word*  
*of the Lord.* 2. *complaints and expostulations* such as  
*Isai 26. 11. Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they*  
*will not see.* 3. *Promises*, such as *Hosea 6. 3. They*  
*shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord &c.* 4.  
*Threatnings*, such as *Psal. 28. 5. because they regard*  
*not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands*  
*he shall destroy them and not build them up; with*  
*Psal. 50. 22. Consider this ye that forget God,*  
*lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.* 5.  
*Commendations*, such as *Psal. 107. 43. whose is wise*  
*and will observe these things &c.* *Hosea 14. 9.* And he  
 that was a wise man and a great observer tells us  
*Ecclef. 2. 14. that the wise mans eyes are in his head.*  
 6. We have also *Discommendations* and *Exprobra-*  
*ons* wherewith the Lord upbraids such as observe  
 not his works and ways *Isai 42. 18. they are deaf*  
*and blind that will not see: yea Jeremy 4. 22. calls them*  
*Stoicks*, and the *Psalmist* call them *Beasts* *Psal 92.*  
 6. So then by the command of God which is the un-  
 doubted determiner of Duty it is a necessary con-  
 cerning

ing duty to observe the Lords works and ways  
towards his People.

The 2<sup>d</sup>. thing that confirms the point, is this,  
That the Works of God are wrought before his  
People for that very end, that they may observe  
them: and he makes his ways known to men, that all  
men may observe him: take but one pregnant place  
for this. *Isas 41, 20. That they may see and know and  
consider and understand together, that the hand of the  
Lord hath done this, and the Holy one of Israel hath crea-  
ted it. The Holy one of Israel is no Hypocrite, and  
yet he doth all his works to be seen of men.*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> thing that confirms the point is, the  
usefulness of the works of God: There is never  
a work of God, but it hath some excellent instru-  
ction to men that will observe them: every work  
hath a word in its mouth. There is something  
of use in every one: God speaks no idle words:  
every word of God is pure, yea his words are  
like Silver tryed in the furnace seven times: there  
is no dross nor refuse in the Bible: the *lights of Israel*  
and his Holy One works no unfruitful works,  
like the works of darkness: Gods works of Pro-  
vidence are an enlargement and continuation of  
his first piece of Creation; and if the first edition  
of his works was all very good, perfect and un-  
reproveable; how excellent to all admiration  
must the last edition be, after so many? But  
who is wise to understand these things, and pro-  
ficient to know them? who hath these two useful  
volumes of the word and works of God bound in  
one, and so makes joynt use of them in their day-  
ly

ly reading? But howbeit many are unlearned, and to many the book be sealed, yet there are many things in the book. So then since the works of God are so useful, it concerns us to observe them, things tending, even as also they are intended, to our great advantage. And upon this very useful consideration, we will find our selves obliged to observe seriously the Lords works and ways to his People; except we can answer that question, *wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it.* Prov. 17, 16. I shall not here mention that which is, if not a strange confirmation, yet a clear illustration of the Doctrine; and it is the practice of Saints in Scripture who have been diligent students of all the works of God universally, and particularly of his ways to his People: and some have been such proficient by their observations, that they have been able to leave us a perfect Chronicle, with a diurnal account of events in their time, as the Scripture-Historians; others have searched so deep, by the special assistance of him that searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, that they have been able to frame us certain and everlasting Almanacks of the state of future times; as the Prophets. But to pass these, as being acted and assisted by an extraordinary motion and measure of the Spirit of God, Look we thorow all the Scriptures, how Religious observers of the works of God and his ways, whether in general to his People, or to themselves in particular, we find even ordinary Saints and extraordinary persons in their ordinary conversation to have been.

Now

# S E R M O N on Hosea 2. 14.

Now being convinced that it is our concern-  
 ing Duty to observe diligently the works of God,  
 and his Dispensations to his People : Two  
 Questions require to be answered for our further  
 satisfaction, and better instruction in this Duty. 1.  
*What are we specially to observe in the works of God  
 and his Dispensations to his People?* 2. *How are we  
 to observe the works of God?*

To the first Question then, be it presupposed,  
 That there is no work of God, nor any thing  
 in any work of God, how common and ordinary  
 soever, that is not *excellent and Glorious, and wor-  
 thy to be searched out*, *Psal. 111. 2, 3, 4.* But 2.  
 Of all the works of God, some are more Glorious  
 and observable than others, and of every work  
 of God, some things are more excellent and search-  
 worthy than others. 3. That we are not able to  
 observe or take up fully any work of God ; far  
 less all his works. *Eccles. 8, 17.* Whereupon it  
 follows in all reason 4. that we are to apply our  
 selves to the observation of some things especially  
 in the works of God. Otherwise as by a perpe-  
 tual endless divisibility, of the least continuous  
 body ( according to the principles of *Peripatetic  
 Philosophy* ) a midges wing may be extended  
 to a quantity able to cover the outmost Heavens.  
 so the observation of the meanest work of God,  
 may abundantly furnish discourse deducable to  
 perpetuity. But then what shall come of short-  
 breathed man, whose days are an hand breadth  
 in the attempt of an impossibility? he must by  
 the gate, and leave the rest ( as *Italians* do their  
 chess

chess plays) to be told by his posterity. Wherefore I shall but hint compendiously at these four things chiefly, to be observed seriously in the works of God, and his ways towards his People.

1. We would consider and observe seriously the works themselves with all their circumstances, and this is a part to know the times, to know what the Lord is doing to his people in the times: *none would be such Strangers in Jerusalem as not to know the things that happen there in their days.* Luke 24. 18. David Psal. 143, 5. *can say, I meditate on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands.* We might think him a bad Mariner who being at sea should not be able at any time to tell from what air the wind did blow; and we may think him a little better Christian who can give no account of the times, nor of the Works of God in the times; and knows not, it may be care not, how the wind blows upon the Church and People of God. Every one that would be worthy of their room in the time, would study to be acquainted with the accidents of divine Dispensations in the time; not out of *Athenian curiosity*, but *Christian inquiry*; But if it be asked, how far is it betwixt *Antioch* and *Athens*? or plainly what difference is there betwixt Christian inquiry and *Athenian curiosity*? it may not be amiss (as *Paul* *in passing by beheld their devotion* Act. 17. 23.) by the way to take notice out of Act, 17. 19. 20. 21. of these three properties of *Athenian curiosity*, which difference is from Christian inquiry.

1. It runs all upon new things; Even the Ancient

cient truths of the Gospel, and the best things in Gods dispensations, if once they become old and ordinary, do not relish with curiosity. 2. Curiosity satisfies it self with telling and hearing of those new things; it hears to tell, and tells what it hears, and tells that it may tell, and nothing els, as the *Text* says; it is taken up with the report of things more than with the things; it is an empty airy thing. 3. It is a time spending thing: they spend their time so, sayes the *Text*: Curiosity like niggards can spend well upon another mans purse, and give liberally of that which is none of its own: let no man trust his time to Curiosity, which will be sure to give him a short account of *All spent*. But for further satisfaction in the difference betwixt *Athenian* curiosity and Christian Inquiry, let all that be considered which rests to be answered to both the Questions proponed before, upon a particular survey whereof, we shall be able to give a more distinct judgment in the case of this difference. Only as it is kindness not curiosity that makes men inquire, how their friends do: so where there is true kindness to the People of God, it will kyth in a solicitous inquiry concerning their state in all things. But, as the man asked Christ, *who then is my neighbour?* so may the Church and People of God justly ask, But who is my friend? she sees so many as the *Levite*, pass by on the other side, who never turn aside, so much as once to ask how she does, and to whom all is as nothing that she suffers. *Lament. 1. 12, Is it nothing so you all ye that pass*

*pass by?* &c. Let it be remembred then, that the works of God themselves with all their circumstances be duely considered.

The 2<sup>d</sup> thing to be observed in the works of God, is, the Author and hand that worketh these works. This the Saints have observed in the works of God. *Psal.* 39, 9. this they will that others may observe, *Psal.* 109 27. This all may, and ought, and shall in the end see *Psal.* 9, 16. *Isas* 26. 11. who ever be the *Amanuens* or what ever be the instrument, Gods works, as *Pauls* Epistles, are all given under his own hand, with this inscription, *all these have my hands done.* The Scripture hath diverse expressions to this purpose, of the finger of God, the hand of God, the arme of the Lord, and God himself appearing in his works, intimating the gradual difference of manifestations of a Providence, appearing sometimes more darkly, sometimes more clearly in the works and dispensations of God. And yet even the smallest character of providence, if men had on their Spectacles, is sufficiently conspicuous and may be discerned that it is the hand writing of the Lord, for that it hath a peculiar stamp of Divinity that cannot be counterfitted. If God creat but a louse in *Egypt*, that is an original whereof the greatest Magicians can give no copy: because *it is the finger of God.* *Exod.* 8. 19. And yet many read the Epistle without the inscription; many see the hand work, and not the hand, the Work, and not the Worker. Not to speak of Heathen Archeists, of whom some have been darkned with the fancy of a voluble blind *Fortune* and others



the *Heathens* dammish'd with the impressi<sup>on</sup> of an inflex-  
 ible inexorable fate: both equally oppos'd to the  
 will of a wisely contriv'd and freely exercis'd  
 Providence. Nor to speak of heretical *Maniche-  
 ans*, who attributed all evil events of sin or pain to  
 the Dæmoniackal influence of a *malum principium* an  
 independent unprincipiat<sup>ed</sup> Principle of evil, in  
 their speech, a *Devil-God*: nor of malicious blas-  
 phemous *Jews*, who, albeit that they could not  
 deny, that notable Works and Miracles were  
 wrought by Christ, yet calumniously attributed  
 them to *Beelzebub*, which was the finger of God, to *Beelzebub*  
 the Prince of *Devils*. I say, not to mention these,  
 how many are there in all Generations, who have  
 systematically received the true principles of a gene-  
 ral Providence, that, either of neglect, do not,  
 of infirmity and mistake cannot, or of malice  
 will not see, the hand of God in particular events:  
 and therefore we have this frequent Conclusion  
 Gods dispensations whether of mercy or Judge-  
 ment, *then shall they know that I am the Lord*. Un-  
 dermin'd by a providence looseth all the pins and  
 shaketh the whole frame of Religion: and the  
 truth and actual observation of a Providence fixeth  
 that Atheisme looseth. Upon this pin of an ob-  
 served Providence, the Saints do hang many ex-  
 cellent vessels of greater and smaller quantity,  
 and what doth not *David* build upon this founda-  
 tion? *the Lord reigneth*. Let us then observe  
 Providence ruling in all dispensations, and in e-  
 very one of these, let us with old *Eli*, both see,  
 and say, *it is the Lord*: and whether dispensations

be prosperous or cross, let us remember him that hath said, *I make peace, and I create evil.* O let not the observation of providence either slacken our hands in any good Duty: *This evil is of the Lord, wherefore then should I wait any longer for him,* was an ill use of Providence. And this is so like the rest of *Sazans* and *Unbeliev's* Conclusions. Nor 2. Let it strengthen our hands in any small project or practice. It was the Devil that *cast thy self down from the pinnacle because he had but allyen his Angels charge of thee.* Let us not take Providence 3. for approbation of our practice: *Senacherib* who could say that *he was not come without the Lord against Jerusalem.* It was a wicked word in *David's* enemies to say, *God hath forsaken him, let us persecute and destroy him:* But *David* was of another spirit, when God delivered *Saul* into his hand: *let not my hand (saith he) be upon him for wickedness proceedeth from the wicked,* saith the Proverb of the Ancients.—4. Let the dispensations of Providence be determining contingencies of our state before God: for all things are alike unto all, and *no man can know either love or hatred by all that is before him,* Eccles. 9, 1. It is a great vanity in a wicked man to think the blessing of himself for prosperity. And it a great weakness in a Saint, to think the worle of himself for affliction and adversity, albeit all these come from the hand of the Lord. And yet none are here allowed to be Stoically or stupidly unconcerned with the vicissitudes of differing dispensations: for *Eccl. 3, 4. there is a time to weep and a time to laugh.* Q

in the time to mourn and a time to dance. And chap. 7. 14. Of the wise God by the wise mans mouth bids us, in the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.

The 3d. thing to be observed in the works of God and his ways to his People, is the Properties and Attributes of those his works: for as *omne finitum refert suum factorem*, every thing made resembles its maker; so in the works of God generally, and more specially in his ways and dispensations to his own, we have a lively draught and delineation of all the attributes of the blessed Worker. Here is displayed the sovereignty of God which is exalted equally above limited loyalty and licentious Tyranny: for *the King's strength loveth judgment*, Psal. 99. 4. The Sovereignty of God flows from his unlimited Independent nature, is founded upon his transcendent underived right in his creatures, and runs in this method, 1. he is over and before all things: 2. all things are of him: 3. all things are his: and therefore 4. he may do with his own what he will: *he is the only potentat, and to him belongs the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever, Amen.* This sovereignty of the works of God, or of God in his works, is a common pass-key that will open all for the *Adyta*, the secret passages of the most mysterious reserved works of God, in his most surprizing dispensations to his People, and gives the only answer to Questions about many of his dispensations otherways unanswerable: instance these few.

1st. Question. Why hath the Lord elected one to

Salvation, and appointed another to Damnation and that, it may be, of two Brethren, as *Jacob* and *Easa* Twins born, where all things are equal in the Object? Answer. Because "the Potter hath power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. *Rom. 9. 21.* Question 2: Why, in pursuance of the design and accomplishment of the work of our Salvation, did the Lord bruise his own Son and put him to grief? *Is pleased the Lord* *Isa. 53. 10.* Question 3. Why doth the Lord shew mercy to one, and harden another? Answer. *So he will* *Rom. 9. 18.* Question 4. Why to all those that are really in a state of Grace, doth the Lord dispense Grace so differently in time, measure, method, manner and other circumstances? Answer, *as the spirit of God will* *1 Cor. 12. 11.* Question 5. Why doth the Lord distribute an equal reward of Glory to those whose works and service are very unequal in the World? Answer. Because *it is lawful for the Lord to do what he will with his own.* *Math. 20. 15.* Question 6. Why doth the Lord vouchsafe Grace to those most ordinarily who naturally ly at the greatest disadvantages, that the Poor, the Fools, Babes, yea the most desperate forlorn sinners, Publicans and Harlots, are called and do receive the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven and enter thereinto, whilst the Wise, the Mighty, the Righteous, Civil, Well Nourished and Well bred Pharisees are passed by? What should all this be? Answer. *Even so saith the Lord* *Isa. 65. 1.* Question 7. Why

Why doth the Lord choose one People, and  
 tion to make them his People, bring them with-  
 7 ac the bond of his Covenant, and give them a free  
 s an dispensation of his ordinances, whilst he doth not  
 Po to others, and loves them that are of themselves,  
 th may be, the least lovely? Answer "The Lord  
 er loves and chooses, because he loves and chooses  
 y, 7. compare the 7, and 8. verses. Question 8.  
 f th how comes it that the Lord surprises his Saints  
 ow any times with such unexpected kindness and  
 as S mercies, as distress their wits and dash their mo-  
 ey ty so, that they are equally ashamed and igno-  
 an rant of that kindness, wherewith they are so loaded  
 and weighted without wearying, that they are  
 pen terly at a loss to express, let be to requite it?  
 ho Hence is all this, I say? Answer. Because "Gods  
 way with his People, is not the manner of man:  
 And what can *David* say more to it? 2 *Samuel*  
 19. 20. Question 9, But how is it that the Lord  
 ce withdrawes his comfortable presence many times  
 cau from his People, when they are most earnest to keep  
 h m, and solicitous to entertain him? Answer.  
 an that is as he pleases, *Cant.* 2, 7. It becomes us well to  
 s, wait his Dyets, and it as well becomes him to be  
 t d Master of his own Dyets. Question 10. Why is it  
 that the Lord gives many of his finest and most  
 in holy Saints, such a sad inward life of desertions,  
 t t tears, Tentations, that are able to distract even a  
 as Heman from his youth? and to make them  
 W deserters also of such Exercises? Answer. I find  
 this Question made by *Heman Psal.* 88, 14. but I  
 and no answer to it. And it may be, the Lord

would have said it is ill speired. The just answer to this and such like Questions is, *Job. 33. 13.* *gives not account of any of his matters.* Question 17. dispensations how is it that either all things are alike to all; or if there be any odds of Lots, the worst falls to the Saints in this life? And that sometimes men that are singularly Holy are strangely afflicted? as *Job.* Answer. *Job 9, 22, 23.* "This one thing, therefore, I said it; he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked, if the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. O Sovereignty becoming him only who doth Heaven and Earth whatsoever he pleaseth! The next property and attribute of God observable in his works, is wisdom: and this sweetly influences the former: for albeit God always will not, yet always he well can, give a good account of his matters: "known unto God are all his works, from the beginning, *Act 15. 18.* Yea the Lord sometimes manifests the wisdom of his works evidently and eminently, to his Peoples admiration rather than satisfaction, and lets them see more wisdom in his dispensations than they can fathom: *On depth! Rom. 11. 33.* I dare not cast my self into the depth of this wisdom of God in his dispensations, lest I be not able in haste to recover my self. Only let us mind that what we know not now of God's mind in his dispensations, it may be we shall know afterwards to our great satisfaction. We should likewise observe in the works of God Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness (where more in the sequel of our discourse) and particu-

uly we would observe the Truth, for which the  
 so much commends the judgements and  
 and works of God : we should observe, how every  
 work of God verifies some word of his book, and  
 how all fulfills the whole. We find it frequent  
 in the mouth of Christ and his *Apostles*, and sure  
 it was first in their eyes : " thus and  
 thus it was done that the Scriptures  
 might be fulfilled. The works of  
 God are an enlarged Commentary of  
 a daily new edition upon the Word of God. And  
 be sure, this shall not be an *Orleans gloss* that will  
 overturn the Text; nor will the only wise God so  
 far forget himself, in the least to counter-work his  
 Word. And if thus we observe the corresponden-  
 cy of Gods Works with his Word, our Song shall  
 be : " as we have heard, so have we seen in the  
 City of our God. And that according to his name  
 so is his praise to all the ends of the earth. *Psal. 48,*  
*8, 10.* Only let us be sure to have the Word on our  
 side, if ever we would expect good of the Works of  
 God : for if Gods word be for us, himself is on our  
 side; & if God be for us, who shall be against us? who is  
 the man, what is the thing? *neither death nor life &c.*

*See the ful-  
 filling of the  
 Scriptures.*

The Fourth thing to be observed in the works  
 of God is the voice of them. Gods words have a  
 hand, and are active working words : his Works  
 have a tongue, and are speaking works : his words  
 may be seen. *Jer; 2. 12.* " O generation see ye  
 the word of the Lord : and his works may be  
 heard, *Mica. 6. 9.* " the Lords voice cryeth to  
 the City, and the man of wisdom shall see the thy

name, hear ye the rod and him that hath appointed it. There is both a visible Voice and name, and an audible Rod. Men have no ears for Gods Word, or if they hear it, they dally with it, and make out what they please, darkening it with the darkness of their Carnal self-pleasing glosses: but God hath another Voice, the heavy voice of a bloody lasting rod: that Voice will cause men hear, and it speaks so distinctly that it will make the meaning Word of a despised Word so plain, that it shall be even as visible what God would say to such hearers. As the *Apostle* sayes. 1 Cor, 24. 10. there are so many kinds of voices in the World, and every voice hath its own signification: So the several works of God have their several signifying voices to the Sons of Men. Some Works of God have a Voice of *Instruction*: some have a voice of Lamentation: *Jesus* once wept over the City *Jerusalem* with the piteous voice of his Body: *Jesus* often weeps over Cities, Churches, Provinces and Kingdoms with the *Metaphoricall* voice of his Dispensations: some works of God have a voice of gladness and singing *Psal. 93. Rom. 4. 18. Lord hast made me glad through thy work*. Some have a voice of Victory and Triumph and dividing the spoile; "I will triumph in the work of thy hands *abundantly*, in that same verse: *Miriam* and sing. *Exod. 15. 1. the Lord hath triumphed gloriously*; and *Psal. 47. "the Lord is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a Trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our God, sing praises.* Some Works of God have the voice of a Lyon roaring, some of a thundring



# SERMON on Hosea 2. 14.

pointing cracking, some of waters rushing: some Works  
of God have a still whispering voice, some have  
a clear speaking voice, some have a loud crying  
voice. The still voice whispers in the Conscience,  
the plain clear voice speaks in the Word, and the  
loud voice cries in the rod: *the Lords voice cries*  
*lastly the City, heare ye the rod and who hath appointed it.*  
Now they hear and observe the voice of God's  
Works that make the true use of every dispensati-  
on that it requires, that lament when the Lord  
Mournes, that dance when he Pipes, that tremble  
when he Roares, that hearken when he teaches,  
that answer when he calls: and thus every Godly  
Soul is an *Escho* to the voice of God: "The spirit  
says come, and the Bride says come: The Lord  
says return, and the sinner says, behold we come:  
He says, seek ye my face, and the Soul says, thy  
face will I seek O Lord. But as Christ says, it  
is only he that hath an ear who will hear, and  
as the Prophet *Micah* says) "it is only the man  
of wisdom that will see Gods name and hear the  
Rod. And I take him to have a bad ear, and little  
skill in discerning voices, that cannot give the  
Tune of God's present dispensations to his People  
in these Nations. But it will appertain to the  
answer of the next question, to give the particular  
notes of this tune, and to hold forth the proper  
uses of present dispensations to the Church and  
Saints of God.

The 2d Question proponed was, how are we  
to observe the Works and dispensations of God?  
To the question I answer, that we are to observe  
the

the dispensations of God. 1. with selfdenyal and humble diffidence of our own wisdom and understanding. There is 1. to much of mystery in the dispensations of God. *Verily thou art a good that believest thy self O God the Saviour of Israel, Isai 42, 19.* And 2dly So many even good observers, Godly men, have verily mistaken so far in their apprehensions of Divine dispensations, (Witness Job and his freinds *who darkned counsel by words without knowledge? Job 38. 2. and 42, 3.* whereupon the Lord poses Job in the former place, and which he freely confesses in the latter) That it is needful at this point, if in any, to hearken to instruction *Prov 3, 5, 7. lean not to thine own understanding: be not wise in thine own eyes.* Humble David though wise David, who for his discerning *was as an Angel to God 2 Sam. 14. 17. would not exercise himself in matters too high for him, Psal. 131 1.* whereof the dispensations of God are a high part, which he acknowledges to be too hard for him to understand *Psal. 73. 16.* And his Son Solomon whose wisdom is so renowned, taxes all rash and unadvised inquiry into the works of God *Eccles. 7, 10.* There is no safe nor true discovery of the Works of God but through the prospect of his Word *Psal. 73. 17. We must go to the sanctuary with Gods Word* the Word will let us see, that wicked men are set upon slippery places, even when they seem to stand surest, *Psal. 73. 18.* And when their roots are wrapped about the earth, and they see the place of Stones, while they lean upon their House and hold it fast, "While they are in their greenness, the

are cut down, and as the rush they wither before any other herb. *Job. 8. 11.* and foreward. Yea whilst the Saints look not upon their own state and Gods dispensations to them, according to the Word, they are ready to mistake right far. "I said in my prosperity, my mountain stands strong and I shall never be moved: thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled. And upon the other hand, "when I said, my foot slippeth, Thy mercy, Lord, it held me up: Wherefore let us ay be ready to hearken to better information, in our apprehensions of Divine dispensations and particular events, remembring that *all men are liars*. But for the general issue of things, we may be well assured without all fear of mistake, *That it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked*: for this is the sure word of Prophecie *Isai 2. 10. 11.* Yea not only shall it be well with the Righteous in the end, but *every thing* how cross soever in the way shall conduce and *concurr to work his wellfare*: And this is a truth that shall never fail, and wherein there is no fear of mistake, *Rom. 8. 28.* And the Scripture abounds with Noble instances of this truth. But by the contrary, all things how prosperous soever that fall to the wicked in his way, shall in the end redound to his woe, and turn to his greater misery: of this likewise there are in Scripture instances not a few. Learn we then to observe dispensations of particular events with humility and submission to a better Judgment.

adly We must observe the works of God with Patience, *if we would know the Lords going forth we must*

*must follow on to know* Hosea 6. 3. In our observation of dispensations we must not conclude at a view nor upon their first appearance. There is 1. so much of surprisal in many dispensations, that often they escape our first thoughts: verily, says Jacob, "God was in this place, and I knew it not Genes. 28, 16. "when the Lord brought back the "captivity of Zion, sayes the Church, we were "as men that dreame Psal. 116, 1, When the Angel delivered Peter, he wist not whether that it "was true that was done; but thought he saw "a vision Act. 12, 9. There is 2. oft times much Error in our first thoughts of things that needs to be corrected by second thoughts *divine peritiam sequitur*. second thoughts are the wiser. I say (as David) *I am cut off from thine eyes*; but I said it over soon, *I said it in my haste*, I took no leasure thoroughly to consider the matter: And therefore *I will look again toward thy Holy temple*, I looked, but I must look again; I said, but I must say again. The Scriptures gives many instances, of the Saints mistakes and errors in the first thoughts of Gods dispensations: and in these *passiones aliquod humani*, they are but like men. Sometimes again 3, the Lord goes thorow in his dispensations by a method of contraries: he brings his People into the dark, before he cause light shine out of darkness; he brings them (as the Text says) *into the driery Wilderness*, and there he comforts them; he wounds before he heal; he kills before he make alive; he casts down before he raise up: And therefore there is need of Patience to observe the whole course of

SERMON on Hosea 2. 14.

67

dispensations and their connexion: for if we look upon the many parts, we will readily mistake in our Observation. I find likewise 4. In many Dispensations a reserve, the Lord keeping up his mind, as it were to bait and allure his People to observe: *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself O God the Saviour of Israel, Isai 45. 14.* O Lord we cannot see what thou wouldst be at: what I do thou knowest not now (says Christ) but thou shalt know afterwards. Like a man if he see his hearers slack their attention to a serious discourse, he breaks off and pauses a little, to reduce them to a serious attention: so does God in his works to gain us to a diligent Observation. Therefore in our Observation of Dispensations, we would be like *Abraham's* Godly servant *Genes. 24, 28.* he held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. Moreover 5. in some Dispensations the Lord uses a Holy simulation, and makes as if he would do that which he hath no mind to do. Sometimes he makes to take leave of his People before he tell his Erand, *Let me go says he to Jacob,* when *Jacob* was but yet beginning to know that it was he, and ere ever there was a word of the blessing, which he came to leave with *Jacob* for his encouragement in his encounter with his Brother. And Christ made as if he would have passed by his Disciples at Sea: and the like semblance he made *Luke 24, 28.* Now if we can have the patience to observe, we will sometimes see the Issue of Dispensations other than it appeared. And for patient Observation of Dispensations 1. respect *sinners* is,

a good advice, *Behold the end.* P<sup>sal</sup>. 37. 37. It is the end that we are bidden mark and behold, as I said above. We must not conclude of Dispensations neither by appearances nor parts: We must wait till we see every part do its part: for *all work together* Rom. 8. 28. And 2. *respice usque finem*, Behold or observe to the end, is an other direction necessary to the practice of the former: who would see the end must behold with patience to the end. *Daniel* 12, 8. enquires concerning the end of things, and he observes till the time of the end, looks thorow all interveening times of the accomplishment of these events manifested to him; so albeit none of us hath a propheticall Spirit to lead us thorow future times, yet the Faith and Patience of Saints teaches us to wait all our appointed time. In our patient Observation of Dispensations we must be like the Prophet *Isa* 21, 8. where he said *I stand continually upon the watch tower in the day, and I am set in my ward whole nights. My soul waits for the Lord* sayes David. *more than the watch waits for the morning* P<sup>sal</sup>. 130. 6. I say more than they that wait for the morning, and by such patient Observation he had seen many a foul night have a fair morning: *Sorrow may be at night, but joy comes in the morning.* P<sup>sal</sup>. 30, 5.

3<sup>dly</sup> We should observe the Lords Dispensations with Search and Scrutiny P<sup>sal</sup>. 77. 6. *my spirit made diligens search.* 1. We should search the Lords affection in Dispensations, and whether they be in mercy or in wrath: "many get their will and ask- ing in wrath P<sup>sal</sup>. 78. 30. 31. some are rebuked

## SERMON on Hosea 2. 14.

It is and chastened, but not in wrath nor displeasure  
 as *David* Prayes for himself *Psal.* 6, 1. Therefore  
 the question would be *Jer.* 14. 19. *hast thou*  
*mustab?* *hast thy soul loathed Zion?* 2dly We would  
 search the Reasons and procuring causes of God's  
 Dispensations *Job* 10, 2. *show me wherefore thou art*  
*kindest with me?* 3dly We would search and inquire  
 the event of Dispensations, *wilt thou not re-*  
*move us again that thy People may rejoice in thee?* *Psal.*  
*135. 6.* We are allowed likewise 4thly to search and  
 inquire anent the continuance of Dispensations: to  
 this purpose we read in Scripture many a *how long*  
*for Lord?* In sad Dispensations likewise 5thly we should  
 search for solid grounds of comfort, and for this  
 end we should remember bygone times, and remem-  
 ber the kindness we have tasted of in them, *Psal.*  
*139. 49.* *Lord where are thy former loving kindnesses*  
*faithful?* *Psal.* 77. 10. *I will remember the years of the right*  
*hand of the most high.* But in the Observation of  
 Dispensations our search would be, 6thly chiefly a-  
 bout our Duty: our main question would be,  
*Lord what wilt thou have me to do.* *Act.* 9, 6. And  
 our great Petition with *David* must be, "lead me  
 O Lord in thy righteousness because of mine  
 enemies, make thy way straight before my face,  
*Psal.* 5. 8. "teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will  
 walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy  
 name *Psal.* 86. 11.

4. We should observe the Dispensations of God  
 with Regard, the challenge is *Isa.* 5. 12, *that they*  
*regard not the work of the Lord.* This Regard is a  
 judgment and estimation of the works of God  
 with

with reverence becoming the Majesty, worth and excellency of the worker, and the works, and that leaves an impression of Piety and Religion upon the heart of the Observer: according to that psalmick exclamation *Rev. 15. 4.* "who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" for thou art Holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest. Due Observation of the works of God is a great curb to *Atheisme* and *Prophanity*: and *Atheisme* and *Prophanity* are as great enemies to due Observation of divine Dispensations. Put men in fear O Lord that they may seek thy name.

5ly We should observe the Lord Dispensations with Affection: *Lament. 3. 51. mine eye affecteth mine heart*: the Prophet's Observation of Dispensations made him cry, "my bowels, my bowels, my heart is pained within me!" *Jer. 4. 19. I reckon him a savage person, and one that hath viscera fero* *triplex circa pectus robur*, the bowels of a tygar or bear, and that his heart is brass, oak, or stones, who is not affected with the Dispensations of our times; "who grieves not for the afflictions of *Joseph* *Amos 6. 6.* and who cries not "alas for the day, for none is like it. It is the day of Jacob's trouble. *Jer. 30. 7.*

6. We should observe the Lords works with Memory: in our Observations of things present, we should reflect upon these that are past in former times. *I remember the days of old* *Psal. 193. 5.* And likewise we would lay up in memory our present



Observations for the time to come *Psal. 48. 12, 13.*  
 Mark ye well that ye may tell unto the generation fol-  
 lowing. We have both joined together *Psal. 48. 14.*  
 that which we have heard and known and which our  
 fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children  
 showing to the generations to come the praises of the Lord,  
 and his strength, and his wonderfull works that he hath  
 done. The Psalmist says *Psal. 111. 4.* The Lord hath  
 made his wonderful works to be remembered. O! then  
 let not the memory of the Lords Works go down  
 in our days. Let us comfort our selves with what  
 is remembered: and let us transmit the memory of  
 the Lords Works to succeeding Generations, that  
 they may share of the same comforts. And I be-  
 lieve the People of God in this time have much to  
 do with their memory: we hear not what we  
 were wont to hear, nor see what we were wont  
 to see: We are now left to gather up the Fragments  
 of former enjoyments by the hand of a Sanctified  
 Memory. One says, O, I shall still think well of  
 Christ! He shall be to me as the Apple tree a-  
 mongst the trees of the Wood: for the day was  
 when *I sat down under his shadow, and his fruit*  
*was sweet to my taste.* Cant. 2. 3. Another says O  
 how I love the house of God well! And O when  
 shall I come and appear there before God! for the  
 day was when *I saw the Lords Glory and his power in*  
*his sanctuary.* *Psal. 63. 2.* And O when shall I see  
 thee like again? O how shall that be? Then make  
 use of thy Memory, and remember that David  
 when in the Wilderness returned and dwelt in the  
 house of the Lord all the days of his life. Remem-

ber likewise *Isa* 64. 3. that God did for his People things which they looked not for, he came down from the mountains flowed down at his presence; and they build their hope upon in their presence.

Conclude thou then with *David* 2 *Sam.* 7. 23. That "if thou hast found favour in the eyes of the Lord: he will bring thee again, and shew thee both his Ark and his Habitation: This Scripture hath long lodged in my thoughts, and while mine own heart, like *Sarah* behind the Tent doot laugh and says, shall these things be? In reproach and scornful unbelief, I thus both use and please to reason. Those who find favour in the eyes of the Lord he will bring them again, and shew them both his Ark and his Habitation: to wit the Sanctuary. But the many wandering Saints and out-cast Ministers and People of these Nations find favour in the eyes of the Lord: Therefore they shall be brought back to see the Ark of the Lord and his Habitation. Let unbelief answer the first proposition: Let even their enemies answer the second, and they who shall deny the Conclusion?

7. We would observe the Works of God and his Dispensations with Use: the useful Observer is the good Observer of divine Dispensations, and this is that which before, in Scripture phrase is called a harkening to the Lords Voice in his Dispensations, and a discerning of their Tune. There is no Work of God, but it hath a Voice, and it hath a Use; and the Works of God are of so universal use that hardly is there any truth in the Word of God but we are taught it by some Work of God.

pertinent, nor take I pleasure here to charge  
general, of the proper uses of the several  
works of God; But having above supposed, as  
the truth is, that to any who hath an ear to  
hear; *The voice* of present dispensations to the  
Church in these Nations is beyond all dispute a  
*mournful one*. I shall therefore shortly hint at the  
proper uses of such Mournful Dispensations; and  
shall direct them all from the *third chapter* of the  
*Lamentations*.

The first Use of present Dispensations is, for  
lamentation. *Verses 48, 49, 51.* Mine eye,  
mine eye, mine eye! mine eye runneth down with  
rivers of Waters. Mine eye trickleth down and  
ceaseth not, without any intermission: mine eye affecteth  
mine heart. O Call all that are skilful to  
mourn, and let them raise up a Lamentation. But  
though neither our Eyes weep nor our Voice La-  
ment, yet even our Condition it self doth weep and  
Lament to God. *Jer. 12. 10, 11.* Many Pastors have  
destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion with  
their foot; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate  
wilderness, they have made it desolate, and bring deso-  
lation; it Mourneth unto me, the whole land is made de-  
solate, and no man layeth it to heart. Come then and  
raise up a Lamentation together all that are sorrow-  
ful for the Solemn Assemblies. Lament smitten  
shepherds, Lament scattered flocks, Lament hun-  
gry and thirsty Souls, Lament desolate Congre-  
gations, Lament poor doubting disconsolate Chri-  
stians, Lament closed Churches, Lament empty  
pulpits, Lament silent Sabbaths, turn your joy

into Mourning, O our blessed Communion-time  
 Lament Cities, Lament Barrows, Lament ye  
 Villages, and my soul shall ~~mourn~~ *mourn* in secret places,  
~~and the~~ *and the* Lord's flock is carried away. Jer. 13. 17.  
 say it is a Lamentation, and shall be for a  
 mentation. We never saw the like since Popish  
 terdictions, so many Glorious lights obscured  
 these Nations. And if an enemy had done it  
 then might we have born it; if Pope, if Turk,  
 Pagan: But thou O----a friend, a Protestant  
 Prince of the Covenant! What thing shall I  
 to Witness for this?

But because the Apostle bids us *Mourn as those*  
*have hope*. The 2<sup>d</sup> Use of present Dispensations  
 be to Hope, *verse 21.* "This I recal to my mind  
 therefore have I hope. *verse 24.* in him will I hope  
*verse 26.* "it is good that a man should both hope  
 and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord  
*Isai 8. 17.* "I will wait upon the Lord that hides  
 his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look  
 for him. It is wonderful to see, how contrary  
 conclusions Faith and Unbelief will draw from the  
 same premisses. The Lord is wroth and hides his  
 face, then say believing *Isai* and *Jeremy* "we will  
 hope in him and wait for him; yea but set up  
 believing *Joram* to it, and he will tell you shortly  
 why should I wait any longer for him 2 *Kings*  
 32. And if he must know why; *Jeremy* (*Lament*  
 3. 26.) can tell him, *it is good*: and if he ask what  
 good is in it? *Isai* will tell him more particularly  
*Chap. 30. 18.* The Lord is a God of judgment, and  
 blessed are all they that wait for him. *Psal. 52.*

all wait on thy name, for it is good before the Saints: here we see it is the judgment of all the Saints, that it is still good to wait on God. O then let us wait on him that hideth his face from the honest Jacob; for surely there is hope. But where is our hope? our hope is in God that saveth the upright: he is the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble Jer. 14. 8. So long as he is God, so long is their hope: and to say there were no hope, were to say there were no God, and they would be God of his Glory and Title who fall in their hope.

The 3d Use of present Dispensations is Submission. *verses 27, 28, 29, 30.* "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth: he sitteth alone and keepeth silence: because he hath born evil upon him: he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope, he gives his cheeks to him that smiteth him, he is filled with reproach, and *verse 39.* wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? What ever be the Lords Dispensations, it is our part to submit. And because Submission to Gods Dispensations is a hard duty to our rebellious corrupt hearts, I find the lamenting Prophet tacitly insinuating to perswade submission upon these grounds. 1. From the mitigation of Dispensations: the Lord punishes not as we deserve: we are living men and are not consumed, and that his mercy renewed every morning. And indeed that is less than Hell to a sinner, is mercy undeserved *verse 22, 23.* 2dly from the good that

may be expected of the saddest Dispensations. *verse 27.* "It is good that a man bear the yoke in his youth: there is no lot so ill, but a well exercised Soul can make good of it. *3<sup>rd</sup>* From the hope and our-gate in the issue. *verses 31. 32.* "the Lord will not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. 4. From the Lords unwillingness to afflict. *verse 33.* "for he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the Children of men. 5. From the Lords Sovereignty *verse 37, 38* "out of the mouth of the most high proceedeth not evil and good? 6. From mens deserving justly the saddest things. *verse 39.* "wherefore doth a man complain for the punishment of his sins? and *verses 35. 36.* the Lord approve no unjust dealing. But true submission is not stupid, idle, heartless thing: and if we suffer our hearts wholly to be idle, they will not fail, like unemployed Souldiers, to mutin, and so find themselves both unhappy and unlawful Workers: therefore they must be diverted to that which is good.

Take we then the *4<sup>th</sup>* Use of present Dispensations to imploy our hearts with all, and that is Self-examination. *verse 40.* *Let us search and try our ways;* a pertinent and very necessary work for such a time. Amongst the many things we get-leit now to think on, let this be minded as none the least: as the fying Pot for Silver and the Furnace for Gold; so is affliction to a sinner, a discovering and purging thing. Affliction (as I have

efore) will cause men hear on the deafest side of  
 their head, it will open their ears to discipline, it  
 will cause them see things that before they would  
 not see. Let us then set in earnest to the Work of  
 self-examination while we have the advantage of  
 such a help.

The 5th Use of present Dispensations is Repent-  
 ance in that same 40 verse and *let us turn again to  
 the Lord*, What ever by Self-examination is disco-  
 vered to be amiss, (as hardly any man shall search  
 himself faithfully but many such things will be  
 found with him) let all that be amended: for if  
 our scum be only discovered and go not out from  
 us, we shall be in hazard to be consumed in the  
 furnace. Repentance well becomes a sinner at any  
 time; but especially when God with rebukes is  
 chastising man for iniquity, and pursuing sin with  
 Rod: And Gods hand will still be stretched out, nor  
 will his anger turn away, till the People turn to him that  
 chastises them, Isai 9, 12, 13. If we would freely turn  
 to the Lord from all iniquity, we needed neither fear  
 the wrath of men, nor be beholden to their kind-  
 ness, the Lord should then command deliverances  
 for Jacob, as it is said Psal. 44 4. and should cause  
 the best of them be glad to go his Errands and serve  
 at his Commands, *But our iniquities turn away and  
 withhold good things from us Jer. 5. 25.* O if once  
 that sweet Word were going thorow the Land,  
 Hosea 6. 1. every one sending it to his neighbour  
 and saying, *come and let us return unto the Lord.*

The 6th Use of present Dispensations is much  
 Prayer, verse 41. *Let us lift up our heart with our*

hands to God in the Heavens, and if the People  
 God set once to Prayer in good earnest, it will be  
 high time for their enemies to fear a mischief; for  
 sure the cloud of the Saints Prayers will break  
 a tempest upon their fatal heads. The three  
 verses of the Chapter are dreadful to them. *Render  
 unto them a recompence O Lord, according to the Work  
 of their hands: give them sorrow of heart; rebuke  
 unto them: persecute and destroy them in anger from  
 under the Heavens of the Lord.* And if the destitute  
 People of God were mighty in Prayer, wrestling  
 with God, weeping and making supplication to the  
 Angel as Jacob did, I could tell the Church of  
 God good news, that then the Lord would build  
 up Zion, and would appear in his Glory, and  
 he would regard the Prayer of the destitute; and  
 despise their Prayer Psal. 102 16, 17. For the Lord  
 is even waiting his Peoples Call, *Isas 30. 18, 19*  
*the Lord waiteth to be Gracious, he will be very Gra-*  
*cious to thee,* "at the voice of thy cry when he shall  
 hear it, he will answer thee. And what will he give  
 us? he will give us our removed Teachers with the  
 fulness of the blessing of the Gospel, in a plenti-  
 ful and powerful Dispensation of the Word *Isas 30.*  
*20, 21.* O then Let all that love *Jerusalem* Pray,  
 and let us wrestle together by Prayer, and each  
 Pray with another, and for another, and to ano-  
 thers hand, and let us all join hands, and see who  
 can give the kindest list and go nearest to raise up  
 the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, that we  
 bear not the shame, that this breach is under our  
 hand. Now all these uses of afflicting Dispensati-



persons, are as pertinent to the Cases of particular  
 Persons, whose heart knows its own grief, and  
 who know every one the plague of their own heart.  
 And by all the rest Prayer by the Holy Ghost is  
 prescribed, as a chief ingredient in all the cures of  
 an afflicted case *Jam. 5, 13. Is any man afflicted let*  
*him pray.* Prayer hath its famous witnesses in the  
 Scriptures, of the great things that it hath done;  
 neither wants it its witnesses in the breasts  
 of all the Saints. One word of sincere Prayer will  
 cause Devils, and men, and lusts, and fears, and  
 cares all run, and will burst the strongest bands.  
 One word of sincere Prayer from the end of the  
 earth, will at a call bring God to the Soul, and  
 with him light, joy, peace, enlargment and Soul-  
 solace. But if any be so obstinate, as the *Jews* were  
 in the case of the Blind man, that they will not  
 believe famous well qualified witnesses, who know  
 what they speak, and speak that which they have  
 seen; I say but of Prayer to them, as the blind  
 mans Parents said to those of him *John 9, 21, ask*  
*him, he shall speak for himself.* Try but Prayer in  
 earnest, and I have no fear to be found a false  
 witness: for its own works it shall praise it self best,  
 and then I shall be thought to have spoken within  
 bounds. And thus I have answered the questions  
 proposed for instruction in the Observation of di-  
 vine Dispensations: all which may serve (as I  
 said) to state a clear difference betwixt *Athenian*  
*wisdom* and a *Christian inquiry* into the works of  
 God and his ways towards his People.  
 Having already prosecuted the Doctrine in a  
 way

way (as I hope) not unuseful, there remains the  
 less to be said to it by way of Use distinctly, in  
 the usual way. Only be it remembered that we  
 observe the Lords Dispensations in manner afore-  
 said: and for encouragment take but one place  
*Psalm 107. 42, 43. the righteous shall see it, and rejoice  
 and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise and  
 will observe these things, even they shall understand the  
 loving kindness of the Lord. And so much for the  
 first thing in the Text, the Note of Observation  
 Behold.*

*I will bring her into the Wild-  
 derness.*

**T**HE second thing in the Words is, the inti-  
 mation of the Churches Condition. *I will  
 bring her into the Wilderness.* And hence  
 the Doctrine is, *That these to whom the Lord minds  
 good, may expect to come to the possession of intended  
 blessedness by the way of a Wilderness.* Behold says the  
 Lord *I will allure her, and speak comfortably unto her:*  
 there is my design upon her, and these are my  
 thoughts of Good concerning her, but first *I will  
 bring her into the Wilderness.* In the prosecution of  
 this Doctrine, three things are to be considered. 1.  
 What is this *Wilderness*? 2. Wherefore doth the

# SERMON on Hosea 2, 14.

Lord bring his People into the Wilderness? 2. What use we are to make of this intimation of such a Condition?

1. First then, what is the Wilderness? 1 Answer 1. in general, it is a Figurative expression of an afflicted Condition. *I will bring her into the Wilderness*; that is, I will exercise her with such Afflictions as men are wont to meet with in a Wilderness. And therefore 2<sup>dly</sup> I find a *Wilderness Condition* importing these things particularly.

1. It importeth a Condition of Want and Scarcety both of Temporal and Spiritual things *Hos. 1, 37.* "those of whom the World was not worthy" were destitute of all things: *2 Cor. 6. 10.* The Apostles that made many Rich, were themselves "as poor": and they that possessed all things were "as having nothing. *Psal. 107. 4, 5.* They that wander in a Wilderness are hungry and thirsty; and their Soul fainteth in them. *David Psal. 63. 1.* says *my Soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is*: he had no doubt, his own temporal Wants, and those great enough, but his greatest Want was of the waters of the Sanctuary, as is clear from the 2<sup>d</sup> verse, *To see thy power and thy Glory so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary*: and the same was his Condition in the 42. and 43. *Psalms*, And this is the supposed Condition of all the People of God. *Isai. 41. 17.* "they are poor and needy, they thirst for water and there is none, and their tongue longeth for thirst. The want of Water, which is a most common thing, denoteth the scarcity of Grace.

82 SERMON on Hosea 2. 14.

scarcety and want. And this is the first thing in a Wilderness-Condition. The many hungry Bellies, and no fewer hungry Souls in these times which are crying, *my Leanness, my Leanness*, do plainly say, that we are entred more nor a days journey into the Wilderness.

The 2<sup>d</sup> thing imported in a Wilderness-Condition is Desolation and Barrenness, *Psal. 63. 1. and Psal. 107. 33. a Wilderness is a dry land, a thirsty Land where no water is. Jer. 9. 12. It is burnt up like a Wilderness*, and likewise a Wilderness is a desolate place: there no foot of man doth come; there the Cities are made heaps; there nettles grow upon the ruines of Glorious Temples. This Desolation and Barrenness is the cause of scarcety and want in a Wilderness. And this likewise we have felt in our Wilderness; we Want, but we know not where to get it: the Wells are stopped, good Occasions for our Souls are removed, our Teachers are removed into Corners, the Songs of our Temples are become howlings. We may sing the 8 verse of the 46. *Psalm* with a sad note, *Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth*: and where Desolations end, there beginneth Barrenness and dry breasts. As in one place we have the Wells of water and the Streams from Lebanon stopped, in the next place we come to, we find Clouds without rain, and Pits without water, Trees whose fruit is withered, and without fruit, *Epistle of Jude 12 verse.* men who either never had any thing, or els have lost what once they promised. As if Christ (O sad!) had come

by and said, henceforth never fruit grow upon you; if we were thirsty beside the water, or hungry beside Food, or sick beside the Physician, or sorrowful beside a comforter, or in darkness beside light, we might the better bear it: But that it is other ways shews we are indeed in the Wilderness.

3<sup>dly</sup> The Wilderness importeth a Solitary Condition of Separation from comfortable, sweet and useful Society: *David* felt this in the Wilderness *Psal.* 42. 4. "When he remembered that he had gone to the house of God with the multitude, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept Holy day: and for that his Soul was poured out in him: *Heman* felt this in his Wilderness *Psal.* 88. 18. *lover and friend hath thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness*: The afflicted, overwhelmed Composer of the 102. Psalm felt this likewise in his Wilderness, 6. and 7. verses. "I am like a Pelican in the Wilderness, and like an Owl of the desert, I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. *Isa* 35. 1. "The Wilderness is a solitary place. Good company and sweet comfortable useful Society hath this to prove it a choice mercy, that (as the rest of that nature) it is never well known nor prized by us, till we are denyed it, and deprived of it. And now (with *Pharaohs* Butler *Gen.* 41. 9.) "I remember my faults this day; and I fear I have too many fellows in the fault, who either neglect disdainfully, or els abuse good Company to the increase of vanity. Now begin I to understand

stand more of that Text *Eccles. 4. 9, 10, 11, 12.*  
 And what a woe is it to him that is alone, and yet I  
 doubt not but the kindness of the Lord is shewn to  
 many, even in separating and scattering them one  
 from another: And to confirm me in this judg-  
 ment, I remember the Opinion of some who have  
 been in account for skill in things of that nature:  
 And thus they have thought, that when a Family  
 or Balm-time incline to a Consumption (which  
 being a disease hereditary runs much in a blood)  
 in that case it is good that they part Company, and  
 live at a distance one from another, for that the  
 disease is strengthened by their social conversation.  
 I apply, that the evil and hazard of the Company  
 of those that are tenderly beloved Children of God,  
 may move him even in kindness to send them a-  
 part: but they will find it a kindness not so com-  
 fortable as needful. As I could like to be hungry  
 beside good meat, or weary beside good lodging:  
 so I would choose to be solitary beside good Com-  
 pany, that is, so to enjoy my self by my self, as  
 that I might likewise enjoy the help of Christian  
 Company at will with conveniency. And as I am  
 sure that God was never the instituter of the  
*Monks Order*; so, sure I am, none can choose to  
 shun good Company, but such as would choose  
 their own affliction, and forsake their own mercy.  
 Only I must here mind that good People are not al-  
 ways good Company: but a good Man or Woman  
 are only then good Company, when they shew  
 their goodness in Company, so that they may do  
 good to the Company: and therefore, though it  
 may

SERMON on Hosea 2, 14.

may seem a Paradox, yet it is too true; that we cannot always say we have been in good Company, when we have been in the company of Good Men. Let Good People keep fellowship and company; let the evils and vanities of good People be discharged from the Company, let Good People do good in Company, and so Good People shall be Good Company. But as often as we miss good Company, let it mind us that we are in the Wilderness. And be it here added (because I love not to multiply) that it is no small part of the Saints Wilderness to be vexed and infested with evil Company. The Scripture describes a Wilderness to be the place of Owls, Ostriches, Wolves, Lyons, Serpents, Satyres, Devils, Dragons and all evil Beasts and doleful Creatures: And as it is said of Christ literally, *Mark, 1, 13.* that in the Wilderness he was with the wild Beasts, so Christians are mystically neighboured with the like in their Wilderness: their righteous Souls are vexed with hearing and seeing daily their doleful and detestable practises, besides their Persecutions whereof it follows to speak, particularly.

4. The Wilderness importeth a Wandering and unsettled Condition, *Psal. 107. 4.* "they wandered in the Wilderness in a solitary way, they found no City to dwell in, *Heb. 11. 37, 38.* those of whom the World was not worthy wandered about in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. We read in the History of Scripture, how *Israel* wandered, and how many years they changed in the Wilderness of *Egypt* forty years, We read of the *Patriarchs* *Psal. 105. 12.* how

how as strangers in the land of Promise "they  
 "went from one Nation to another, from one  
 "Kingdome to another People. We read, in the  
 1 Sam. of David's wandering from one Wilderness  
 to another, and amongst the rocks of the wild  
 Goats which he resents with Tears, *Psal. 56.* *Thou tellest my wanderings, sayes he, put thou my*  
*Tears into thy bottle, are they not in thy Book?* And  
 this is even the wilderness-condition of the Saints  
 and Servants of God this day in these Nations  
 How many driven from Station and Relations  
 and put to seek Lodging amongst Strangers  
 What strange Unsettling is there among us? By  
 Outing, Confinement, Banishment, denouncing  
 Fugitive; and all these by Laws and Acts so con-  
 trived, as if they meant only to grant the Lord  
 Servants *Jeremys* deploring with *Jer. 9. 2.* "O he"  
 "that I had in the Wilderness a lodging-place of  
 "wayfaring men, that I might leave my People  
 "and go from them. And all these are beside  
 the particular wanderings of the Lords scattered  
 flocks whose Condition we may see *Exek. 34. 6.*  
 and throughout: "my sheep wandered throughout  
 "all the mountains and upon every high hill, yet  
 "my flock was scattered upon all the face of the  
 "earth and none did search nor seek after them."  
 5. The Wilderness importeth a Condition of  
 Temptations, *Math. 4. 1.* "Christ was led into the  
 "Wilderness to be tempted *Psal. 95. 8. 9.* *Israel*  
 "time in the Wilderness, is called the day of Tem-  
 "tation. I know it is there meant Actively of these  
 Temptations; as is clear from the 9th verse, *Thou shalt*



the *Devils* tempted me, proved me, and saw my works.  
 on that when I look back upon *Moses*, who himself  
 as with the Church in the Wilderness, and well  
 knew their case, I find him reckoning it a time  
 of Passive Tentations also, such I mean wherewith  
 they were tryed and tempted *Deut. 8. 2.* "And  
 thou shalt remember all the way, which the  
 Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the  
 Wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee,  
 to know what was in thine heart, whether thou  
 wouldst keep his Commandments or not. It is  
*Exod. 1. from Jam. 1, 15.* that God tempteth no  
 man. 2. It is a great question whether *Satan*  
 hath a hand by temptation in every sin of man.  
 I judge, that *Satan* hath not such a hand  
 in every sin as some are ready to say and think.  
 "The *Devil* is not so ill, we say, as he is called, nor  
 so ugly as he is painted: many men father those  
 sins upon the *Devil*, that have their own hearts  
 set against Father and Mother: and many sin with-  
 out a Tentation *ab extra*, or from without. Yet  
 in the 4th place, it is manifest from *Jam. 1, 14. 15.*  
 that a man is tempted at least by his own lust, as often  
 as he sins. And thus there is no sin without some  
 kind of temptation, either from another or from the  
 man himself: and where there is much sin and  
 provocation, (as was amongst the *Israelites* in the  
 Wilderness) there is much Tentation. Let the  
 People then expect to find their Wilderness  
 place of Temptation. And are not Tentations  
 thick in the way of Gods People in these  
 times? Is there not a net spread upon mount *T-*  
 L

but? may we not say with the *Psalmist*, *Psal. 143. 3.* *in the way wherein I walked have they laid snares for me?* Is not the case now, you must find out how to do thus or thus as men (who because they have no Conscience of their own, therefore care not for yours) shall please to command, or els do otherwise upon your perill? And when things might be otherways be better ordered and established, are not Laws and Acts contrived so as occasions may be sought against those, *against whom*, like *David* *Chap. 6, 5.* *there can be found no occasion, except in the matters of their God.* Is not this the house of temptation? *Rev. 3. 10.* But when enemies be given over, and done their worst, in come our friends (who as *Peter* to *Christ* *Matth. 16. 23*) give a temptation to us, O, say they, look to yourself, and play not the Fool. And when all this prevail not yet, in comes Carnal, Worldly, Proud, believing, Grudging and disquieting thoughts from our own hearts, and these, as in a refuge to guard, give the last and most dangerous assault, and specially if the force of our spirits be any way daunted or disordered by the foresaid attempts and therefore *James. 1. 14.* (looking over the former as it were) tells us that then *a man is tempted*, when he is led away of his own lust and enticeth, and then it is high time to look to our selves, where our enemies are those of our own house. Many have borne the force of outward attempts who do much ado to sustain the impetuous assaults of their own disquieted and disquieting hearts. *Psal. 42. 1.* and *43. 5.* "Why art thou cast down O my soul?"

“and why art thou disquieted in me? And therefore *James* pronounces him the “*blessed man Chap. 1. 12. that endureth temptation.* The Temptations of an afflicted lot is the great Affliction of our lot: and therefore in Scripture Afflictions are called Temptations, and they that escape the Temptations of Affliction have got above all hazard of Affliction otherwise: for Temptations being the snare of Affliction, when that is once broken, the strength of it is spent, and it's force is over.

6 The Wilderness importeth a Condition of fears, and perplexing Doubts: for the Wilderness being a *land of darkness.* Jer. 2, 31. and a place where there is no way, it puts the traveller inevitably to many sad fears, and perplexing doubts. The afflicting fears and doubts of Saints in the Wilderness may be reduced to those three chief heads. The 1, are concerning their spiritual Condition and state before God. The 2, are concerning their present incumbent Duty and Work. The 3, are concerning three vents of incumbent Disturbances. I cannot endure, nor dare I expatiate more largely in a discourse of these particularly, lest either I faint in the way, or once turning off but a little from those dark mysterious paths, I be not able quickly to recover the high way: for if I speak to what purpose, I may readily prognosticate that to the fate of my discourse, which is of their case who are once engaged in the intricacies of these complexities, that hardly can they quickly rid themselves. This only I must say, that those things that have been at their wits end in these things,

things, and have not known in all the World what to do, can best tell what it is, to be brought into the Wilderness. And this I observe, that even as men have got a custome to plant Wilderness in the midst of pleasant Gardens; so many men in their otherwise good Books and Sermons, imprudently either starting difficulties unseasonably, or pursuing them excellivly, do rather creat the clear perplexities to poor Souls, and give them the entertainment of a toilsome divertisment in place of solid refreshment. But my project invites me if I could be so happy, rather to plant a Garden in a Wilderness, than a Wilderness in a Garden. I fear there is in the World but too much artificial Religion and exercises, like Garden-Wildernesses, invented rather for pleasure than created by necessity. I fear some Christians, like some Preachers, rest more off their book, nor they repeat off their heart. But I doubt the pleasure of an artificial Wilderness will either relieve or compensate the grief of a real One. Elaborat, fine, accurat Discourses Christians Doubts and cases whatever they desert in their own place, will be found but Physic of no value, and miserable comforters to Souls that are in earnest; except he that reveals secrets and looseth the Prisoners lighten the doubting Soul's darkness, with a beam of his own presence. In the 42. *Psalm*. David had said well to it, but *David* says best, 41. *verse*, *be is the health of my countenance and my God*. As Gardens are more pleasant for men in health, than for sick men; so, Discourses of Christian cases, in doubts and perplexities

will readily do better, either before or after the distemper, than in the time. Much Prayer and communion with God, is the best book of cases that ever a doubting Soul read, and is blest with the manifest discoveries and manifestations of God, to those that walk in darkness and have no light.

7. The Wilderness importeth a Condition of Reproach and Persecution: *Job 30. 5.* describes the reproachful base Condition of his Adversaries that mocked him from this, that, "they fled into the Wilderness and were driven forth from among men who cryed after them as after a thief. And *Rev. 12. 6.* the woman in travel the persecuted Church fled into the Wilderness. This was *David's* Wilderness-Condition. *Psal. 55. 3.* "because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me, and in *verse 6 & 7* I said, O that I had wings like a dove: for then would I flee away and be at rest. Lo then would I wander far off, and be in the Wilderness, Selah. The scourge and persecution of false tongues, being worse than the venome of Asps, the sting of Serpents, or Poyson of Dragons that haunt the Wilderness, makes often the Wilderness a refuge and rest to be desired by the Reproached People of God, and the wrath and cruelty of wicked men makes the Saints often times and Lyons, Bears Wolves and Dragons to be betwixt their neighbours. *Heb. 11. 36.* *Cruel mockings* is the first item in the account of Saints sufferings: and then follows *Scourging, Bonds, Killing Sawing, tempt-*

ing, Torturing and wandering about. And the Apostle 2 *Timoth.* 3. 12. warns all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, that there way lyes thorow this Wilderness of persecution, whereof reproach is not the least part: for compare *Gen.* 21. 9. with *Galat.* 4. 29. that was carnal *Ishmael's* Persecution, wherewith he persecuted his Brother *Isaac* the son of the promise. And they had tryal, says the Apostle, of *Cruel mockings*: and the slandering tongues of wicked men are compared in Scripture to the sharpest and most bitter instruments, sharp arrows, Coals of Juniper, Swords, Spears and the poyson of Serpents: Racking and Torturing may break a mans bones, But *Reproach*, says the *Psalmist*, *hath broken my heart*, and it hath dammished my very Spirits, for *I am full of heaviness* *Psal.* 69. 20. And now when the People of God live in "a land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old Lyon, the viper and fiery fleeing Serpent, *Isa.* 30. 6. pray, who will not call that a Wilderness? and where are they, think you, whose soul is among Lyons? *Psal.* 57. 4. If any shall search the records of our Scottish Inquisition (the Creature that likes not to be called the high Commission) they may be soon convinced that these are no fictions of Fanaticks and disaffected persons. But the question is not demonstrative (for I warrand they have more Loyalty than to do any these things that they say are so good service to----) but juridical; for *Jure factum dicitur* they do all by Law forsooth, and so justify all their practises: But are all Laws righteous? or

ere such a thing in the World as a *throne of mi-*  
*ty which frameth mischief by a Law.* Psal. 94. 20.  
 They think possibly (as Paul once thought) that  
 they ought to do these things, and that they do  
 good service; to God indeed they do not say, but  
 ---they cry. But stay till Christ examine the Bra-  
 vest man amongst the Examinators, upon that little  
 Question, *Why persecutest thou me?* and then my Lord  
 inquisitor comes in upon second thoughts with his  
 confession, *I was a Blasphemer, a Persecuter, and in-*  
*carcerous.* 1 Timoth. 1. 13. And then the fools ex-  
 use is alledged by him that thought himself so  
 wise (for *sapientis non est dicere, Putavi*) I thought  
 that I should have done these things. But what think  
 you now Sir? Why now I see that which formerly  
 called Loyalty, zeal and good service, must change  
 its Name without any change in the Thing: for it  
 both was, and is, no other thing but Blasphemy, Per-  
 secution and injury. Such a thing as this has been,  
 8. The Wilderness importeth a Melancholi-  
 ous, sad and dejected Condition. This follows  
 from all the rest. Any who ever travelled alone  
 thorow a Wilderness, may easily understand this;  
 and there is reason for it: because a man is there  
 deprived of any thing that may cheer his Spirit, and  
 freed of all gladdening Objects; besides that he is posses-  
 sed with fearful apprehensions of evils that may be-  
 fall him: and his spirit in the very entry is amused  
 with the uncouth and solitary nature of the place.  
 To say no more of this: the very Countenances of  
 the Lords People in these times look like a Wil-  
 derness: and sad cause why; we see many things

to make us sorry, little to make us glad. We see  
 such things as we nor our Fathers have not seen the  
 like. And if there were no more, and albeit for our  
 own particular we had no occasion of grief, and  
 though like *Nehemiah* we were serving the King  
 with Wine, and were of as jovial an humor as he  
 who was not wont afore time to be sad: yet if any  
 should ask the Kings Question. *Nehemiah* 2, 2.  
 "Why is thy countenance sad seeing thou art not  
 "sick? This is nothing els but sorrow of heart:  
 may we not sadly reply with him in the 3<sup>d</sup> verse  
 "Why should not my Countenance be sad when  
 "my City, the place of my fathers Sepulchres ly-  
 "eth waste, and the Gates thereof are consumed  
 "with fire? That is, when the Church of God is  
 laid desolate. But I suspect there are few that truly  
 love God, or are kindly sons of *Zion*, but they  
 have their own particular grievances in these times  
 wherein they share of the common lot of the  
 Church their Mother that sits in the dust: and  
 is good it be so: For *we, to them that are at ease in*  
*Zion.* Amos 6. 1. The particular grievances of  
 Saints and their pressures, serve well to keep them  
 mindful of the Churches common lot: for fellowship  
 in calamity is such a pregnant incentive to  
 sympathy, that even Jesus himself was made the  
 more compassionat, for what he himself suffered  
*being in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*  
*he cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*  
*Heb. 4. 15.* And does it not well suite all the  
 children to go in Mourning when the Mother sits  
 desolate and afflicted as a Woman forsaken? *Ezra*



how could they expect to be comforted with her, if they do not Mourn for her? Solomon that great Master of Religion, Nature, and Reason, hath determined *Eccl. 7. 2, 3.* "that it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. And that sorrow is better than laughter; for that by the sadness of the Countenance the heart is made better: and he who is greater than Solomon, who himself often weep, but never (that we read) once laughed, pronounceth them *blessed that mourn, for that they shall be comforted. Matth. 5. 4.*

9. This Wilderness importeth a Condition of Weariness and fainting: This yet follows naturally from all that hath been said *Psal. 107. 3. those that wander in a Wilderness, their soul fainteth in them; Psal. 63. 1. Davids Wilderness was a thirsty, or (as the Original hath it,) a weary Land: and Isa 32. 2. it is expressly rendered a weary Land. The Saints of the scale in their Wilderness is often like that of the Egyptian. 1 Sam. 30. 11, 12. who was so outwearyed that he fell off from his company and sunk in the Wilderness. David often complaineth that he was weak, that his spirit failed, his soul fainted, his throat was dry, his eyes failed whilst he cryed upon the Lord and waited for him. And no wonder it is that the Saints so often weary and faint by the way: but a great wonder it is, that any of them should hold up to the end: They have such long stages in the Race that is set before them, and whole in a thirsty Wilderness where hardly they can drink of the brook by the way: and they must run it so oft about with fresh parties whereof possibly*

sibly the worst comes last upon them, when they are already so much exhausted, that there is great reason, for him that would wager upon their heads, to ask, whether they have so much confidence remaining as to answer that Question Jer. 12. 5. "If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and it in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst they wearyed thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan. But the Lord that makes the Question must answer, and one Prophet must Answer another: and how Jeremy could do all that, *Isaiah* can tell Chap. 40. from the 28 verse to the end: *the everlasting God, the Lord that created the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, &c.* Let the people of God in their Wilderness expect to have their hands full of it, and as much as shall put them to a strict necessity either to believe or utterly to give it over. Psal. 27. 13. *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* Now this is the Wilderness: and thus is answered the first thing in the point, What is the Wilderness.

II. The second thing to be considered in the point is, Wherefore doth the Lord bring his People into the Wilderdes? The Scripture sheweth that for one or more of these five Reasons the Lord doth this.

1. He doth it for their sin: and that in these five Respects. 1. to convince them of sin. It is long many a time ere the Lords sinful People will see or acknowledge their sin: yea they will

they are innocent when their transgressions are most evident. Jer. 2. 23. and therefore verse 35. *I will plead with thee, because thou sayest I have not sinned.* Such as are kindly Melancholians may know by experience, what effectual impressions the change of places hath to the changing of mens minds: and for this it is necessary often times that men be sent to learn that in the Wildernets, which they could not, it may be they would not, see at home in a land inhabited: Jer. 22. 21, 22. *I spoke unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidest I will not hear, and therefore thou shalt go in to captivity.* Affliction is quick-sighted, and necessity is wise and Ingenious: affliction according as it is blest, or not blest of God, hath very contrary effects upon men: Solomon tells us that affliction makes a wise man mad: and he that is greater than Solomon tells us, that affliction sometimes makes a mad man wise. Luk. 15, 17. it brought a distracted. Prodigal to himself. Many men think it a piece of Wit and Gallantry to maintain their sinful courses in a Day of prosperity; and if he be a benefited person or one in place, he is ill worthy either place or benefit who is so scant of Discourse, that he cannot (if his our craft be in danger to be set at nought Act. 19. 27) make an Oration in defence of Diana; and at least, cannot say to his Companions with more truth than Wit, though yet with more Wit than Honesty, *Sirs ye know that by this Craft we have our wealth, ib. verse 25.* Yea if the Lord by his servants plead with some men in Prosperity for their iniquities, anon he shall have a reply thus bring forth his

his Rod which is fitted for the back of fools; and is the only cogent argument with such persons. Take two instances shortly, one is *Isa. 31. 2.* those people were bent upon Idolatry; and when they were reprov'd and threatned for that by the Lord, then they were confident in the assistance of *Egypt* and when yet they were taxed for that, no doubt, they would tell the Prophets, Self-defence was not unlawful, and many such witty stories, till the Lord concludes the dispute with that, *yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evil doers, and against the help of those that work iniquity.* And now let those great Wits and grand Disputers say to it *Jer. 13. 21. What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?* Say to that Gallants, or you have said nothing. The next instance is *Ezek. 17.* from *verse* to the end; *Zedekiah* had given an Oath of fealty and subjection to the King of *Babylon*, he Rebels against the King of *Babylon* and breaks his Oath: the Lord pleads with him for that, O! might he say (mark you the Language of our times) it was a forced Oath made against his will: yea, may be, it was an unlawful Oath for him to subject himself and the Lords People to Heathens by a bond: and therefore why might not he take his occasions to break it, if once he had but strength to maintain the breach? And, may be, *(as Papists think that Faith ought not to be kept to Hereticks, so they call Protestants)* he thought neither ought it to be kept to Heathens: But mark from the place 1. against the *Papists* who

that it is called significantly the King of *Babylons* Oath, in the 16 *verse*. I mark 2. In the same *verse* against other Covenant-breakers. That whatever by *Zedekiah* was or might be alledged, it was all but a prophane despising of the Oath: for untill once it be lawful to take Gods Holy and fearful name in vain; it shall never be any thing els but Prophanity and Perjury to break Covenant upon interest. I mark 3. from the 20 *verse* against all Patrons of Perjury, and such as teach Rebellion against the Lord; the Lords great Argument, which usually he reserves to the Conclusion of such Debates: well, says the Lord, in the 19 *verse*, he hath sworn an Oath, and hath broken it: but I will let him know what an Oath is; I will Swear another and will keep it: *as I live saith the Lord, surely I will recompense it upon his own head.* And in the 20 *verse*, *I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon and will plead with him there, for his trespasss that he hath trespassed against me.* And this was performed 2 Kings 25. 6, 7. and 2 Chron. 36. 20, 21. Prosperity to many is as the day light to Owles and Barts, it daz'ls their eyes, and blinds them, that they do not see their Errors till it be too late. *Zedekiah* saw not his faults till he saw them without his eyes at *Riblah* in the Land of *Hamath*. To say no more of this: if other Arguments will not convince men that are guilty of Perjury, there is a necessity they must go to *Babylon* for Instruction: As the Lord lives, (they are the words of God, and it is their meaning, I Per-

Jury shall get a convincing stroke. It is a *Scots* Proverb, *As fore greets the Child that is beaten after noon, as he that is beaten before noon* : The Church of God and his Saints in these Nations have gotten a forenoons correction; but wo to them that get the after-noon strokes. See the Parables *Jer. 24* throughout. To conclude this reason then; Let us not seek conviction of our sin the length of the Wilderness, nor at the rate of bitter Affliction: but let us all take the Council *Jer. 6. 8. Be thou instructed O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited* :

The 2d. Account whereupon the Lord brings his People into the Wilderness for sin, is, for the vindication of his Glorious and Holy Name from all appearance of connivance at, or partaking with his peoples Sins, *Numb. 14. 21. As truly as I live, says he, all the earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord*; that is, with the Glorious manifestation of his Justice against his Peoples Sins: And he often threatens, that those who profane his Name and make it to be Blasphemed, he will return their shame upon their own Faces. If any of us hath a Friend who is leud and dissolute and debauched, we are ashamed of him; because his Faults reflect upon us: And therefore we hold our selves obliged for our own Vindication to testify our displeasure against him. And so it is with the Holy one of *Israel* and his sinful People.

The 3d. Account is to imbitter sin to them, *Jer. 2. 19. Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing*

S E R M O N on Hosea 2, 14.

101

thing and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that his fear is not in thee. As Abner said to Joab of the war, so I say to every one of their sins 2 Sam. 2. 26. Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? Prosperity sweetens sin to Sinners, which of it self is sweet enough to their corrupted Palate: But the Gall and Wormwood of affliction gives it its own kindly relish.

The 4th. Account is, that he may put a stop to his People in their course of Sin. Thus Hosea 2. 6. *I will hedge up thy way with Thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her Paths; and verſe 7 She shall not overtake nor find her Lovers:* Many in prosperity are so engaged by custom to courses of Iniquity, which nothing but affliction can interrupt and put a stop to; and they must take their march into the Wilderness to divert them off the Paths of Wickedness. O that all who are in Affliction, and in the Wilderness, would take this advantage of their impetuous over-hailing Lusts and Idols; and had Wisdom to improve such a good occasion, of a perpetual Divorce and Separation, from the sins that were wont easily to beset them, and as easily to prevail with them! It is not time, when people are in the Wilderness, to rush every one to their course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battel, never once asking what is this I am doing: But it is then seasonable Daniel 4. 27. *To break off our Sins and Iniquities;* Least we go further on, than that we can safely retire our selves.

The 5th. Account is, that they may truly repent and thoroughly return from Sin to God. In the

the 7 verse of this chapter, when by affliction she is put to a stand in her course of sin, it is yet intended further, that she return to her first Husband, and this is brought to effect, *Hosea chap. 6. verse 1. Come, sayes she, and let us return unto the Lord: For he hath sorn, &c.* Simple cessation from sin, without true conversion in time of affliction, may put a person or People to *Pharaoh's* Expences of multiplyed Rods and Plagues one after another, with the hazard of utter destruction in the end. Learn we then in the Wilderness to say as is meet to be said unto God, *Job, 34. 31, 32. I have born Chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Let us turn throughly from all iniquity, and that with all our Heart. And thus to the first reason and its several respects, *Why the Lord brings his People into the Wilderness: It is for their sin.*

2. The Lord brings his people into the Wilderness for their Tryal and Exercise, *Deut. 8. 2.* "The Lord did all that unto thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his Commandments or not. *Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5.* Tribulation sets all graces on work in the Saints: Thus the Lord dealt with the Church *Psal. 44.* from the 17 verse to the 23, and *Psal. 66. 10.* Thus he dealt with *Job.* The Lord is come to these Nations with "his fan in his hand, he will winnowing us as Wheat, and he will throughly purge his floor. *Math. 3. 12.* "and who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiners fire,



and like fullers sope; and he shall sit as a refiner  
 and as a purifyer of silver: and he shall purify  
 the sons of *Levi*, and purge them as Gold and  
 Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an of-  
 fering in righteousness. *Malach. 3. 2, 3.* Now  
 the secrets of many hearts are discovered: now we  
 see the ground of mens stomachs, and what cor-  
 ruption and rotten stuffe hath been lurking under  
 the beauty of untryed profession. Would not some  
 have said, am I a dog? if that which they have  
 now done had been told them a few years ago.  
 Now it is seen *Daniel. 11. 34.* that many did cleave  
 to the Covenant with flatteries; but the next verse  
 being the 35. says further, That some of them of  
 understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and  
 to make them white, even to the time of the end, be-  
 cause it is yet for a time appointed. Therefore blessed  
 is he that endureth to the end. And let him that  
 standeth take heed lest he fall. The strange disco-  
 veries, the great stumbling, and many fallings  
 of men in these times, afford me the serious and  
 confirmed thoughts, how few there are that shall  
 be saved, and how hardly these few. *Malachie's*  
*refiners fire* comprehends both all the tryals of a  
 present time, and also and specially, the great and  
 solemn last tryal of the Judgment of the great day,  
 when many a mans work shall be burnt up, and him-  
 self shall be saved, yet so as by fire. *1 Cor. 3. 15.*  
 When shall all the sinners and hypocrites in *Zion* be  
 found and surprized: for that they cannot stand  
 in the devouring fire, nor with everlasting burnings. *Mat-*  
*th. 24. 14.* There will be many amissing that day in  
 the

the Congregation of the righteous, that here has  
 suten chief in the Assembly. In general this is t  
 verity: but towards the particular perform of  
 there, I must walk with Charity, as toward  
 self, with fear and humble Jealousie: This on  
 all would remember, that they who cannot endure  
 the wide sieve of larger tryals in a present time, w  
 never be able to abide the narrow search of a str  
 judgment at the end of time. But as the Lor  
 will have his People tryed, so he will have the  
 likewise Exercised and their Graces imployed. Idl  
 ness is a hateful and unhappy evil in People. We f  
 an idle man must always have something to work  
 he, that ceaseth to do well, will soon learn  
 do ill. To prevent that, the Lord puts work  
 his Peoples hand: for he hath not given the  
 Graces and Talents, to hide in a napkin under  
 earth, but to be imployed and improven to use  
 and therefore he appoints affliction as a ta  
 master to call forth all their Graces to work  
 and to receive the Tale of every mans Work, th  
 it may be known what profit they make. Th  
 time of affliction should be a busy time, like Ea  
 ing time and Harvest, to the People of God. B  
 alas! to many may be said in truth, that whic  
 Pharaoh said to the Israelites in cruel scorn, ye  
 idle, ye are idle Exod. 3. 17. Only his inference  
 mine run very contrary. ye are idle, says he, a  
 therefore ye say, let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord  
 But ye are idle, say I, and therefore ye say, no  
 let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord. Now, if  
 Lord bring his People into affliction for their

Exercise, hence it is consequentially inferred, that their Afflictions do not Exercise them to purpose, they are not like to come out of them in haste. I hear many but play with their Afflictions, and look upon all the sad sights they see in the Wilderness, but as so many farleyes, fit to entertain their curiosity and to cause them gaze: And I exhort all to be serious with their Afflictions.

3. The Lord brings his People to the Wilderness, that they may be the more fit to receive the impressions of his will, and communications of his Goodness. Thus we see throughout this Chapter, the Lord designs jointly her Reformation and Consolation by all these bitter threatnings and afflicting Dispensations. And Chapter 9, 15. of this same Prophecy of Hosea. *I will go, says the Lord and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: In their Affliction they will seek me early.* And (as the whole have no need of the physician, but the sick) they now finding the delicate of their Affliction to purpose, and so being the better fitted for the Communications of the Lords goodness, in their deliverance, return to him in this confidence, *that he who hath torn will heal them &c.* and that his coming to them, *verse 34.* shall be as the rain to the earth, which being parched with drought is well ready for a shewre. People in Prosperity readily are not so fit to receive either the impressions of Gods will; for then speak to them, and they will not hear, Jer. 22. 1. Or the communications of his Goodness: for then they say *we are Lords, and we will not come to thee.*

Jer. 2. 31. But Affliction fits them better both for the one and for the other. In prosperity, as in the noise of a City, every thing is heard, but nothing is hearkened to: and the common noise swallows up the most distinct and audible voices in a confused insignificant sound. But in Affliction, as in a Wilderness, the stillest whisper of a voice is soon discerned and seriously attended to. Likewise in prosperity, as in a plentiful City or Country, men enjoy all things, and esteem nothing: but in Affliction, as in a Wilderness, wanting all or many things, they account the more of any thing. In a Word, the Lord in the Wilderness and by Affliction is tuning his People to Obedience, that he may bring them forth singing the Songs of Deliverance. Gods commands and his mercies will have another kind of lustre and relish to a Soul, coming out of a famished Wilderness. Formality in Religion, with much vanity and many superfluities wait but too well upon Prosperity: but the cold wind of the Wilderness bloweth these all away, and strengthens the vital heat of the inward man, and makes folk more Religious than formerly with less noise and adoe. Prosperity is an unthankful Piece: for readily the more it receives, the less it accounts of what it receives; and (as a full Soul loaths the honey comb) with a fastidious intolerance it thinks, and by falsely thinking truly makes abundance of mercy a very misery: but (as to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet) the Wilderness, and an afflicted lot blessed of God, will give a man a good stomach for a piece of the bread of

Adver

Adversity, and a Cup of the cold water of Afflictions and will teach him to say Grace to it thus: *I am less than the least of all thy mercies* Genes. 32, 10. So said Jacob when he was coming from his twenty years travels in the Wilderness of his Afflictions in Padan Aram. Prosperity extenuates, sanctified Adversity aggravates mercies: to it any thing less than Hell is a mercy. *Lament. 3. 22. It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed:* to it any mercy is a great Mercy: a great mercy is an extraordinary one: and an extraordinary is a marvelous incomprehensible one. Prosperity counts its mercies by Subtraction, it will take its Bill with the unjust Steward, and for a hundred it will write fourscore, and for fourscore, it will write fifty: But in the Wilderness men learn to cast up their Mercies by Multiplication with the help of Division: in the same place cited *Lament. 3. 22. That we are not consumed*, to some might seem but one mercy, and that a poor one too: yea but the lamenting Prophet finds mercies in that mercy. And truly the mercies of the Lord are homogeneous things, whereof every part hath the Nature and Denomination of the whole: as every drop of water is water; so the least piece of any Mercy is Mercy: and the afflicted, humble, thankful Soul loves to anatomize and dissect the Lords Mercies into parts, as Physicians do humane bodies, that they may informe themselves the better of the number and nature of the parts, and of the frame and structure of the whole. The 136. *Psalm* hath this common with those Mercies which it recounts, that there is more in it than every one can see:

This only to my purpose, everyone may see, how the *Psalmist* tells out the *Lords Mercies* by parts, and insists upon one and the same Mercy, to shew that every part of it is a Mercy; and that, as all the rest, derived from the underived, uncreated, unexhaustible, and ever running fountain of the *Lords Mercy* that endures for ever. Prosperity, like the Widow and her Sons in the matter of the oil, loses and comes short of many Mercies for want of the vessels of faithful accounts and thankful acknowledgments. The Saint in the Wilderness as the Disciples in a desert place, obeys *Christs* Frugal command, it gathers up the remaining Fragments of mercies that nothing be lost, and with those it fills whole baskets: As by the blessing and miraculous Power of Christ, the broken meat, after that Dinner, whereat so many thousands were well filled, was more than that which at the first was set down whole. O! but it is good holding house with *Christ*! It is good to have our portion, be otherwise what it will, with his presence and Blessing, and to have it coming thorow his hands. And as the power of divine contentment can make  $\pi\lambda\iota\omega\upsilon\ \eta\ \mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\upsilon\ \pi\epsilon\pi\tau\iota\tau\omega$  the half more not the whole; so the Wilderness will teach the People of God, the mystery of improving Mercies, to make the increase more than the stock. This, as the rest of divine Arts, is best profest in the Wilderness: and therefore it is that the Lord sends so many of his most hopeful Children thither to be bred: and there they are continued till they have past their Course and taken their Degrees, and then

when they return Masters of the Arts able to teach others, and to comfort them with the same comforts whereunto they themselves were comforted of Christ. 2 Cor. 1. 4.

4. The Lord brings his People into the Wilderness, that he may lead them by, and deliver them from that which is worse. Exod. 13. 17, 18. And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the People go, that God led them not thorow the way of the land of the Philistines, though that was near: for God said lest peradventure the People repent when they see war and they return to Egypt; but God led the People about thorow the way of the Wilderness of the red sea. The Lord prepares his People a place in the Wilderness from the fury and persecutions of men. Rev. 12. 6. And albeit before, I called Persecution one of the parts of a Wilderness-Condition; yet I would have it understood, that every one that comes into the Wilderness, is not led thorow all the Wilderness, nor made to see all the evils thereof, nor do all Afflictions tryt upon every afflicted person: for often times God makes one a mean to prevent and escape another: even as in the case in hand, the Lord sends sometimes his People to enjoy Davids and Jeremics wishes in the Wilderness, that so they may be ridd of ill neighbours: for we say in the Proverb, *Better be alone than in ill Company.* And likewise the Lord by bringing his People into the Wilderness delivers them from the contagion and vexation of the sins of those with whom they conversed atoretimes. Albeit the Wilderness, as I before said, be a place of temptation,

yet the Lord, by some one temptation which his People can better guide, many times leads them out of the way of some other one or more which might be more hazard to them. Surely it is no small mercy to be out of the way, when temptations are marching thorough all the land in solemn procession, and they cry before them, *bow the knee*, and when the wicked walk on every side, who but the vilest men, (*Psal. 12, 8.*) would covet the preferment of the midst? And would not any person of a Holy breath, prefer a Cottage in a well aired Wilderness, to the foul winds and corrupt infectious air of these plaguy times? The plague of a general defection which (as the Pest doth other diseases) hath engrossed all abominations, is now so common, that except it were with *Aaron Numb. 16. 48. to stand between the dead and the living* with the incense of much intercession, that, if it be possible, the plague may be stayed, I should think him a person of that stoutness which they call rashness, and of a pretty well confirmed, if not of a much hardened heart, who otherwise could gladly come into the Company of, or mix himself with the men of this Generation. We say *when all freus fail, fire is good for the farsey*: if God cure this Generation of one Plague by another, I shall think it no more than is necessary: for *Psal. 14. 3. generally they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one*: And now I think I hear a voice from Heaven saying of this Generation, as that other *Rev.*

*Remark how the Plague followed in London, the next year 1666.*

*18. 4.*



people 8. 4 said to *John*, of *Myſtical Babylon*; come out of her  
 of the my people, that ye may not be partakers of her ſins, and  
 be of that ye receive not of her Plagues. And there is another  
 cy to great miſchief that the Lord leads his People out of  
 hing its way,, in bringing them into the Wilderneſs, and  
 they it is the Plagues that come upon wicked men, and all  
 the Gods enemies. The People of God want not their  
 vileſt own viſitations, but they are not like the Plagues of  
 nt of the wicked, their enemies. *Iſa. 27. 7. hath he ſmitten*  
*him as he ſmote thoſe that ſmote him? or is he ſlain ac-*  
*cording to the ſlaughter of thoſe that are ſlain by him?* Yea  
 Holy the Saints Afflictions are excellent Antidotes and  
 neſs, preſervatives againſt the Plagues of their enemies,  
 theſe who are not as, but indeed are the Ungodly  
 tion and the Wicked. We ſee the propriety of the  
 en- Saints Afflictions *Pſal. 94. 12, 13. Bleſſed is the man*  
 that whom thou chaſteſt O Lord, and teacheſt him out of  
 and thy law, that thou mayeſt give him reſt from the days of  
 of adverſity, till the pit be digged for the wicked. A  
 the ſtrange thing a mans motto to be *periffeſſem niſi peruſſem.*  
 ſon I had periſhed, if I had not periſhed: and that cha-  
 of ſtiſment ſhould hide a man from the day of adverſi-  
 ned ty: But both the Hiſtory of Scripture, and the Saints  
 the experience from time time in all Generations, do  
 this yeeld abundance of particular inſtances in confirma-  
 e u tion of this General aſſertion. It appears by *Lot's*  
 ure ſlowneſs to depart, that he took it as a grief to go  
 a- out of *Sodom* hithy as it was: and yet the Lord by  
 ge- that is ſending him out of the miſt of the over-  
 are throw. It is no doubt a grief and great Affliction to  
 , no many of the Saints and Servants of God, that they  
 ca- are removed from their people and place: But when  
 4- judg-

Judgements come upon a place, better to be away than in place. And in the judgment of judicious and great Divines, it prognosticates no good to a place, when the Saints and Servants of God are driven out thereof. Let any read *Aduscianus* upon *Mark. 24.* Alas then for her that bare me, and whose Breasts gave me suck ! for the City the place of my Nativity and education, for the word that is past upon her, and the Prophecy : *When it shall be said to faithfull Ministers of the Gospel, go here or go there ; go to the south, or go to the north, but go not to Edinburgh, then we to thee O Edinburgh.* These are the words and Prophecy of Mr. *Robert Rollock*, which are to be seen in Print before the translation of his book upon the *Colossians*, And is not this the time spoken of.

5. The Lord brings his People into the Wilderness, to Humble them, that they may know of whom they hold mercies, and learn afterwards in prosperity to carry soberly. When *Israel* was upon the entry of a land flowing with milk and honey, *Moses* insists wisely throughout the book of *Deuteronomy* upon the Memory of their case in the Wilderness, and tells them plainly *Chap. 8. verse 2.* The Lord did all that to humble thee: To this end it was that the Lord commanded the pot of *Manna* to be kept by the Ark ; and for this was institute the feast of Tabernacles. Prosperity is an insolent Piece, and will readily cause men forget their maker that hath done all these things for them, and come a free-hold of mercies : *we are Lords say they, and therefore we will come no more unto thee.*

Jer.

wa. 2. 31. Or els they will give the Glory of  
 their mercies unto Idols, in this same *Hosea 2. 31.*  
 to a I will go after my lovers, says she, who give me  
 my bread and my water, my wool and my flux,  
 mine oil and my drink: and therefore the Lord  
 is concerned for the mantainance of his right, to  
 put them out of possession, till they make a legal  
 entry by a humble acknowledgment to him their  
 righteous superior, and be repossessed by a no-  
 velties, as is clear from this Chapter. And  
 many other ways the insolvency of Prosperity  
 is exprest to the dishonour of God, and damage  
 and hurt of our neighbours, by Prophanity, Pre-  
 sumption, carnal Confidence, Intemperancy, Op-  
 pression, and the like: and therefore sayeth the  
 Lord, *Zeph. 3. 12. 13. I will leave in the midst of thee*  
*an afflicted and poor People, and they shall trust in the*  
*name of the Lord, and the Remnant of Israel shall not*  
 do iniquity. He that knows how he has gain'd his  
 Estate, should know how he employs it, and they  
 that come to mercies hardly, should use them well  
 and humbly. If ever God bring his Church and  
 People again to good days and Prosperity, O! Let  
 it be remembered that once we were in the Wil-  
 derness. And thus to the second thing in the point  
 viz. "Wherefore doth the Lord bring his People  
 "into the Wilderness?

Follows the Use which is the 3d thing in the  
 point. The first Use is of warning, and I would  
 sound an alarme, and proclame a march into the  
 Wilderness to all the People of God. Our Leader  
 and Commander, *Jesus Christ* the Captain of our  
 Salvation

Salvation hath long since taken the field, and is gone out on our head *Heb: 13. 12, 13.* Let us then who have taken the Sacrament and Military Oath of *Christ*, and have given<sup>d</sup> our names unto him, go forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. The cloud is now lifted up from over the Tabernacle: and therefore it is time for the Children of *Israel* to set forth: yea the Ark of the Lord, his Ordinances and his People with the best of their Leaders are already in the fields, and are suffering hardship as good\* souldiers. Let us not then for shame lurch at home, let us learn the Religious Gallantry of *Uriah* the *Hittite* that valiant man, *2 Samuel 11. 11.* “And *Uriah* said unto *David*, the Ark and *Israel* and *Judah* abide in tents, and my Lord *Joab* and the servants of my Lord are incamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house to eat and to drink, and to ly with my Wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. It is time our loins were girded, our shoes were on our feet, our staff in our hand, and our stuff and provision upon our shoulder: for we must to the Wilderness, and what if we go out in haste? It is good to be in good Company: *it is better* (if *Moses* had any skill) *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season* *Heb. 11. 25.* They who will not suffer with the people of God may suffer with worse Company. They who will not go forth with *Lot* unto the mountains, may possibly sit still till they get brimstone and fire from Heaven, and the smoak of *Sodom* about their ears:

ars: for he that will save his life unlawfully shall  
 loss it unhappily: and he that will loss his life in  
 Resolution, may find it in Reality. Even as a man  
 doth, in stepping of a Ditch, with any thing that is  
 either of weight or worth to him, his Cloak, his  
 Case of letters, or Papers of concernment, his heavy  
 purse or the like, lest he loss and indamage himself  
 and them both, he casts all over before him, and  
 so coming over with the less trouble, he lites all  
 again upon the other side, and so losses nothing of  
 that which he cast away, but that he might keep it  
 and himself both; whereas if he had kept all about  
 him, he might have lost himself and all together:  
 but *all is not lost that is in peril*: Let us then with  
 chearfulness turn our face towards the Wilderness.

The *second Use* shall be for Information to all such  
 of the Lords People, as are either upon their way to  
 the Wilderness, or are already arrived there: they  
 would not think strange of such a condition: it has  
 been, it is, and it will be the lot of the Lords Children  
*Cant. 8. 5.* the high way to Christs mountain of  
 Myrrh and hill of frankincense lyes thorow the  
 Wilderness, and there he comes forth to meet  
 them, and leads them up in his bolome, leaning  
 upon his own arms. There doth no strange thing  
 befall the Saints when the Lord brings them into  
 the Wilderness: for even as *Moses Exod. 3. 1.* led  
 his flocks into the backside of the desert (and was  
 not that a presage of what followed, when he led  
*Israel* as a flock through the Wilderness?) so doth  
 the Lord oft times with his People: albeit the Wil-  
 derness is a solitary unfrequented place where no  
 foot

feet of man cometh ; yet in it you may take up and trace the footsteps of the *Lords* flock who through much tribulation have entred into the Kingdome of God, and there ye may follow them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. The Saints will find the footsteps of the flock in their greatest Wilderness, and may be helped with the light of precedent Examples in their greatest darkness. For now that the Lord through so many ages, hath led his Saints to Heaven, by so many different paths of Dispensations, (for there is but one common road of Religion, the Kings high Way) I doubt there is any untroden path remaining to be discovered by this Generation. I only fear one difference, which makes indeed a great odds in lots, be found betwixt our case and the case of those that have gone before us, and it is this ; That they were better men in all times, for worse I would none. But in that, I pray whom shall we blame ? and know we not how that should be helped ? See that ye *walk circumspectly as wise, and not as fools : redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* Eph. 5. 15, 16. If ill times find no good men ; let ill times make good men ; and good men will make good times, or els bad times shall make good men better. But of the Parity of cases I said much in the Preface.

The *Third Use* of the point shall be for Direction ; since the People of God may thus expect to be brought into the Wilderness, it concerns them to take their directions for the Wilderness ; for our direction in such a condition, I shall, without

insisting, briefly hint at some things 1 to be avoided. 2d y some things to be endeavoured

Things to be avoided by such as ~~are brought~~ into the Wilderness, are 1 Unbelief. *Psalm 78. 22, 23.* the *Israelites* believed not God in the Wilderness, and therefore he was provoked *Heb. 3. 18, 19.* the *Apostle* tells us expressly, that *those who believed not, their carcases fell in the Wilderness*, and for their unbelief, they could not enter into the land of promise.

2, Discouragement would be avoided *Numb. 14. 1.* the People through Discouragement cryed and wept for the report that the spies gave them. and frequently els-where, they expressed their Discouragement upon the emergency of every new difficulty, *their cry was always, that they should die in the Wilderness*: and in that they read their own fortune, *Numb. 14. 28.* for the Lord was provoked for their unbelief and other sins, to do to them as they had said. Beware of *Unbelief's bode-words*; for like the *Devil's* responses their accomplishments are always evil to those that take them. In all the World I know no such ready way to Apostacy, and utter forsaking of God as Discouragement. Experience hath said so much to confirm this, that I shall not need to bring reason into the field: But this I must say, have the experience of Discouragement who will, they have it to their expences. And if I were to die, I would leave Discouragement this testimony that it is *dear bought misery*.

3. Avoid Murmuring, fretting discontentment with

with the Lords Dispensations with complaints of his unkindness. *Numb. 14. 2. all the Children of Israel murmured, and Chap. 6. 42. they murmured against Moses and Aaron:* But *Moses* could tell them, what are we, that ye speak against us: nay but your words are against the Lord; yea and *Numb. 21. 5. it is expressly said, the People spoke against God and against Moses.* And still their tune was, *why have ye brought us up out of Egypt?* Just like many in our Generation, why say they, your Reformation, your Covenant and your Ministers have served you well: but verily their words are against the Lord: for we owne his name in these, and glorify him whom they dishonour. When the Children of *Israel* murmured in the Wilderness, they had forgotten how once they groaned because of their oppression in *Egypt*: and in that they may be more excusable than we: for the Red sea had ridd perpetual marches betwixt them and their oppressours; but we get not leave to forget our oppression in the times of our former subjection to them, who derive their power from her who is spiritually called *Sodom* and *Egypt Revel. 11. 8.* I mean *Prelats* who are indeed the house of the Elder brother, but fallen back, for that they have come short of the blessing; and now hold of the *Pope*, the younger, who hath supplanted them handsomely, and got betwixt them and the Birth-right; so that now the Elder serves the Younger: those, I say, pursue even to the Wilderness, according as it is prophesied *Rev. 12.* where *John saw the Dragon pursue the travelling woman into the Wilderness.*

4. We



4. We would beware of Tempting God. *Psal.* 106. 14. *they tempted God in the desert, and what that temptation was, see Psal. 78. 18. 19. 20.* They limited the Lord, and said, *can God furnish table in the Wilderness? can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his People?* whatever our temptations be in a Wilderness, though we should fast till we be as Hungry as Christ was in the Wilderness, yet let us learn of him, not to tempt the Lord, by limiting him to ordinary means, since it is written that *man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God,* neither let us rashly nor presumptuously cast our selves into any needless difficulty, nor cast our selves down from a pinnacle of the Temple: for that again it is written, *thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* Just thoughts of God, (and these are large ones) would fit the Saints with a present help in all imaginable difficulties, *Psal. 46. 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

5. We would beware of unmortified, imperious, clamorous lusts. *Psal. 106. 14.* "They lusted exceedingly, in the Wilderness, and *Psal. 78. 18. they sought meat for their lust.* God had given meat for themselves: but they must have meat for their lusts also. Truly he had need have a good vent that would keep a table for his lusts: for lust is so ill to satisfy, that albeit one World serves all the men in the World, yet all the World will not satisfy the lust of one man of the World: Witness he who wept that there were not more Worlds to conquer. But he who must have his lust as soon

N

served

served as himself, that man is not for the Wilderness. I shall advise all that are brought into the Wilderness, to do with their lusts, as *Moses* did with his Wife and Children when he went with *Israel* into the Wilderness, send them back, dismiss them for fear they make more adoe. *Solomon* prefers the Wilderness to the Company of a clamorous angry Woman in a wide house: but how miserable must he be who lives in Company with those scolding wretches, his craving clamorous lusts even in the Wilderness.

6. We would beware of Apostacy and turning back unto *Egypt*: *Numb. 14. 4. They said one to another, let us make a Captain, and let us return into Egypt*: And verse 3. *Were it not better for us (say they) to return into Egypt?* Whatever we meet with in the Wilderness, or whatever may be before us, O let us never think of going back into *Egypt*. *Luk. 17. 32. Remember Loss wife. Remember Hebr. 10. 38. that the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, saith the Lord.* Remember (as I have said even now) we find our *Egyptian* oppression more grievous than ever.

Now for positive Directions and things to be in-  
deavoured by all, that are brought into the Wilderness, take these. 1. And before all, we would labour for the Pardon of sin, and the presence of a reconciled God: This was *David's* great suit. *Psal. 79, 8. O Remember not against us former iniquities, but let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low: and in the 9 verse,*

## SERMON in Hosea. 14.

us, O Lord, for the honour of thy name, and purge away our sin. And over and again in the 80 *Psalms*, as in many others, his request is, *make thy face to shine upon us*. *Moses* was very peremptory in this: for *Exod.* 32. 32. he says, and "now if thou wilt, forgive this sin: if not, blot me I pray thee out of thy book, which thou hast written: and in the 33. *Chapter* 15 *verse* he adds, "if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. Unpardoned guilt and an unreconciled God, will be very uncomfortable Company in a Wilderness.

2. As *Moses* in the Wilderness *Numb.* 13. we would spy the good land that is before, of the twelve that were sent, only two, *Joshua* and *Caleb* were faithful in their report: *Moses* himself trusted their Relation, and put them on to pacify the clamorous People. *Faith* and *Hope* are the two only faithful spies, that will be sure to give such a report of their Discoveries, as may both confirm Believers, and compose the tumults, and quiet the clamours of unbelieving spirits. This was it, that sustained the *Apostles*, without fainting in all their Afflictions: this was the star that guided them through their Wilderness. *2 Cor.* 4. 18. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. In our way through the Wilderness we would raise our estimations of Heaven, thither we would direct our expectations, and whence we would derive our sure consolations, we would see if the spies can bring us down, now and then, a branch of the Grapes of the Land for our

refreshment: and if our Father will honour us with a present of the first fruits of our inheritance, or a Cup of the new Wine of the Kingdom, that we may (as we use to speak) Remember him in the Wilderness. *Psalm 116. 13.* that we may take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. In the History of *Israels* travels, *Exod. 19. 2.* we read, that "when they came to the desert and pitched in the Wilderness, they encamped before the Mount, and *Moses*, in the 3d verse, went up unto God." We would order our camp in the Wilderness, as that we may be always within sight of the mount: We would labour, in all our wanderings, to keep a clear sight of Heaven, and to have our head within the clouds, as it is said of *Moses* *Exod. 24. 18.* *Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and got him up into the mount.*

3. The People of God in the Wilderness would remember much, both what God hath done formerly to his People in the like condition, and what he hath promised to do for those that afterwards shall come into it. Albeit the Scripture generally all over aboundeth with matter to this purpose: yet for the first, what God hath done, recommend specially the *four last books of Moses* which are an exact journal of *Israels* travels in the Wilderness: for the latter, what he hath promised to do, read the 35 Chapter of *Isaiah* throughout with Chap. 41. from verse 16. to 22. with 42. 1. with 49. 9. 10. 11. 12. with 61. to the 9. with 62. 24. 25. See *Jer. 12. 10. 11. 14.* and to the

with Jer. 23, to the 5. See Ezek. 34. throughout Psal. 107. to the 9. with the 2d chap. of Hosea throughout, all these (as I said) not to exclude other places which may be obvious to those that are better versed in Scripture, I do Recommend.

4. In the Wilderness, we would be much in intimate and more than ordinary fellowship with God: as I cited of Moses before, we would enter the Clouds and go up into the Mount to God: and we shall be no homelier than welcome. Cant 4. 8, invites us to this. We never find David higher upon it, than in the Wilderness. We owe that sweet 63 Psalm to the Wilderness of Judah, in the 8 verse whereof it is said, "my soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me, and in the 5 verse, "my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. If a Soul make a visit to God from the Wilderness, they may expect Joseph's Brethrens entertainment, they may resolve to Dine with him at noon. Our Lord Jesus learned this of his Father, "This is a desert place, says he, and we cannot send the People away fasting lest they faint by the way. Yea and after they may have that sweet Musick; "my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; and Psal. 57. 7, 8. my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, O Lord, says he, I am now well at my heart; I will sing and give praise: Awake up my Glory, awake saltery and harp; I myself will awake early; and that

was also a Wilderness *Psalme*. We owe the 43 *Psalme* to the Wilderness likewise, and the 84 whereof more anone. Take we then the direction, that the times of our affliction be times of more than ordinary Communion with God.

5. In the Wilderness we would be diligent to seek good occasions and means for the relief of our Afflictions, and supply of our wants: Need must make vertue with us, *Psal.* 84. 5. 6. *Blessed is the man in whose heart is the ways of them, who passing thorow the vally of Baca, make it a well.* We must not like the unjust Steward, refuse in this case both to dig and beg: we must use all means lawful both spiritual and natural, with God and men: we must with *Nehemiah*, both Pray to the Good God of Heaven, and supplicat the King. *Nehemiah* 2. 4. 5. The day has been when the Nobles and Estates of *Scotland* and our Courtiers, would have suted and courted the King for a Commission, to build the City of the *Lord* and of their Fathers Sepulchers, the Church owning that Faith wherein their Fathers Died, who have left there to Posterity the Sepulchers and lasting Monuments of their Fidelity, Zeal and Religious gallantry: when a Great man would have pleaded for a liberty and protection to a faithful Minister. Then *Israel* and the Lords People in their bounds, in commendation of their Zeal and Diligence sang that song *Numb* 21. 17. 18. "Spring up O well, "sing ye unto it: the Princes digged the well, the "Nobles of the People digged it by the direction "of the Law-giver with their staves. But now  
since

since our Princes and Nobles turned herdmen to the *Philistines*, and servants to *Prelates*, their work hath been to stop, and take away, and strive for *Isaac's* wells, to deprive the People of God, more ways than one, of those occasions of pure and plentiful Ordinances, which they had digged and drunk of: had with labour provided and with refreshment enjoyed. See the case in an *Allegory* Gen. 26. from the 17. verse to 23. I fear when this generation is gone (and if carcasses fall not in the Wilderness, if God make not a clean field, if he do not root out, and make a speedy riddance of this evil Generation from the face of the earth. wiser men than I are much deceived) that *Nigrum thesa* or black mark shall be found written upon the Sepulchres of most of our Nobles, *Nehemiah* 3. 5. *that they put not their necks to the work of their Lord.* And when it is come to that, then who knows but the sons and little ones of our Nobles may be Well-diggers: And as it was in the case of the drought, *Jer.* 14. 3. may come to the waters and to the pits; may be such as shall seek out, and labour for the means of their Souls refreshment. The Lord may bring the little Ones of those transgressors. whose carcasses fall in a Wilderness, into a land flowing with milk and hony, *Numb.* 14. 31, 32. Mean time, let us be digging in the Wilderness, let us seek occasions for our Souls, and where we do not find them, let us make them.

6. In the Wilderness, we would thankfully receive and improve thriftily all offers of accidentall

occasions that providence layes to our hand. *Psal.*  
*84. 6. the rain also filleth the Pools;* that is, the Lord  
 will now and then be giving his out-wearyed  
 People, some unexpected means of present relief and  
 refreshment, which they must acknowledge and use,  
 till they get better and more lasting occasions. Rain  
 water in a Pool, is neither so good nor so enduring,  
 as a spring or fountain of living Water: and yet  
 the former is good, where the latter cannot be had:  
 for to the hungry Soul, every bitter thing is sweet,  
 and little will do a poor man good. If God give  
 us an occasion of a good Sermon, or a Commu-  
 nion; or make any other good means to drop  
 upon our heads, as unexpectedly as the rain falls  
 from the Heaven; or if we have the benefit of the  
 neighbour-hood of a faithful Minister for the time  
 these things, howbeit for their nature and vertue  
 they be fountain water, yet herein the best of  
 them is but like a Pool, that they are of an uncer-  
 tain endurance. For such is the condition of these  
 Wilderness-times, that where one day you have  
 a fountain, the next day you have nothing, or an  
 empty cistern: nor is there throughout all the  
 land, so much as one *Rehoboth Gen. 26. 22.* "one  
 well that the *Philistines* do not strive for. There-  
 fore we must drink for the drought that is to come,  
 we must hear for the time that is to come; *Isa.*  
*41. 23.* we must make the best we can of every  
 occasion that remaines, or accidentally offers for  
 the time, and we must feed upon the little Oyl in  
 the cruse and the handful of Meal in the barrel, till  
 there be plenty in the Land.



7. In the Wilderness we would make use of good Company: yea we would make much of it where ever we can have it. *Psal. 84. 7. they go from strength to strength*, as our Translation reads it, but the Original hath it, *They go from company to company, or, from troop to troop*. Indeed solitude and want of good Company is not the least of the evils of the Wilderness, as I shewed above, in the description of the wilderness: and I believe the People of God in these times will bear me witness in this. But we would seek good Company and make use of it. *Mal. 3:16 the fearers of God*, that were then in the Wilderness, *spake often one to another*. But wandering and unsettlement (another great mischief of the Wilderness) will not let the Saints lodge together: and for that the word of the *Psalm* says, *they go from Company to Company*: when they are driven from one Company, they must draw in to another. Many men never grow good till they are going to die (and indeed, in this World, he that minded to be good, may make him for another World; and blessed be God, we know of another) even so the Saints oft times scarce begin to know the usefulness and sweetness of one anothers Company, nor to use it accordingly, till they must want it. Nor do they any thing worthy of their Society, till they be going to separat. *I said in my heart, that this also is vanity* and a sore evil. Learn we then more timely to make use of good Company.

8. In all our motions and removes in the Wilderness, we would follow and be Ruled by the Cloud

Cloud of Gods presence : thus *Israel* was guided through the Wilderness, See *Numbers* 9. from the 15. verse to the end. The Cloud was a visible token and Sacrament of Gods presence with them. We would so live and so move in the Wilderness, as that we keep always in the presence of God, I mean his propitious comforting presence, whither the presence of God directs us, thither let us go, be it East, West, North, or South, be it fore ward, backward, to the Right hand or left hand. And where we cannot abide with Gods presence, if the Cloud of the Lords presence be lifted up to us off a place, be it otherways never so commodious and sweet ; let us not take it evil to leave that place. If God say to us, as to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. 1. *get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy Fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee ;* Let us, with *Abraham*, obey and be gone : let our desire be only with *Jacob*. *Gen.* 28. 20. *that God may be with us on the way,* and then let him take us through fire, through water, through a Wilderness, or what he will. If the Cloud remove from *Elam* a wealthy and pleasant place, where are twelve wells of water and threescore and ten Palm-trees, so that we may there encamp by the waters, *Exod.* 15. 27. to the Wilderness of *Sin*, an impleasant and a scant place, where we may be threatened to be even slain with hunger, *Exod.* 16. 3. we must march with the Cloud. In a word we must so carry our selves in our whole course, as that we may have the Lords presence and propitious countenance whatever we do.

10. wherever we be. In this case, let us sing the  
 1. Psalm. *The earth is the Lords and the fulness  
 thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.* And  
 Psal. 4 v. 6, 7, 8. must be our song. Let men  
 project and pursue for themselves places of  
 pleasure, preferment and profit, (as most shame-  
 fully they do) let them carve and cut out For-  
 tunes and Portions for themselves, and let them  
 with noise divide the spoil of a Church that is  
 fallen into the hands of her enemies, who are the  
 wicked of the earth; and of many faithful Mini-  
 sters who like the man in the Parable *Luk: 10, 30.*  
*have fallen among thieves:* But stay till mischief and  
 evil go a hunting, and then their ill come  
 Places shall not know them. *Psal. 140 11. evil  
 shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him;* but in  
 the mean time, what comes of the poor outcasts  
 and wanderers? Why, they shall not want a place  
 to go to; in the 13. verse of that 40 *Psal. the upright  
 shall dwell in thy presence:* They may travel through  
 places enough; but be their harbour what will,  
 that is there home. And as it is a *hidden* place to  
 Worldlings, so it is a *biding* place to them, *Psal.*  
*31. 20. thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy pro-*  
*tection,* untill the Lord return to build up Jerusalem,  
 and then he will gather the out-casts of Israel, *Psal.*  
*147. 2. for " he that scattered Israel will gather*  
*him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock;*  
*for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and ransomed*  
*him from the hand of him that was stronger*  
*then he:* Therefore they shall come and sing in  
 the

at the height of *Zion*, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, *Jer.* 31. 10, 11, 12. and foreward to the 15 *verse*. Take we therefore the conduct of Gods presence in the Wilderness and let us be thereof so observant, that by the least wink of his eye we be directed (*Psal.* 32. 8. *will guide thee with mine eye*) to sit still, or let out to turn to the Right hand or to the left at his pleasure: and be our turnings in the Wilderness what they will, be sure we are not out of the way, so long as we enjoy Gods presence, and the comfort of the light of his Countenance. And that will make us with Moses, *Heb.* 11. 27. endure all that we meet with, *who endured, as seeing him that is invisible.*

9. In the Wilderness we would live by faith, and learn to take God for all things, *Psal.* 84. 4. *blessed are they that dwell in thy house*, they will be seeing and enjoying many things, that will make them praise thee; But what if they be put to travel through the valley of *Baca*? then in the 5 *verse*, *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee. He is the fountain.* *Psal.* 36. 9. and he it is that makes all the streams of his Peoples consolations to flow in their seasons, *Psal.* 87. 7. *all my springs are in thee.* O but it is well lost that is found in God! and all that is happily wanted which is supplied in him. O for more of the fountain! O for a larger faith to draw at this deep Well! O Noble Well! a Well that in all our journeys will follow us. 1. *Cor.* 10. 4. we read that the Israelites drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.

We may still encamp and ly about these waters, be-  
 our marches what they will in the Wilderness.  
 This is the only *Rehoboth*; the well of Room: the  
*Philistines* cannot trouble this Well: It is of  
 a higher spring than that enemies can get up to  
 top it: if the Lord make his paths to drop fat-  
 nesses, if they drop upon the Pastures of the Wil-  
 dernesses, see who can hinder it: for the rain waits  
 not for man, nor stayeth it for the son of man;  
 therefore blessed is the man (Jer. 17. 7, 8.) "that  
 trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the  
 Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the  
 waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the  
 river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but  
 her leaf shall be green, and she shall not be car-  
 tul in the year of drought, neither shall cease  
 from yeelding fruit. O let us entertain those  
 large thoughts of God that I have now so often re-  
 commended, and then without boasting we may  
 say with him, that was as oft in the Wilderness as  
 another. *Psal. 34. 2. my soul shall make her boast in*  
*the Lord.* If they be spiritual, sanctuary mercies  
 that we miss, then remember *Ezek. 11. 16. Al-*  
*though I have scattered them among the Countreys;*  
*yet will I be to them a little Sanctuary in the Countreys*  
*where they shall come.* Remember and sing 84,  
*Psal.* already cited, with *Psal. 63.* and 41. If they  
 be temporal earthly mercies that we desiderat,  
 then remember *Psal. 24.* above cited with, *Deut.*  
*8. 2, 3. "the Lord led thee through the Wilderness*  
*"and humbled thee with hunger, and gave thee*  
*"Manna, that he might make thee know that man*  
*"doth*

"doth not live by bread only; but by every word  
 "that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord  
 "doth man live. I leave it to every one to try  
 what is in God, and in the blessing of God. And  
 in the mean time, let us learn to take more upon  
 trust with God. There is no waste ground in  
 God: meet his People with scant where they will,  
 they will meet with none in him. Jer. 2. 31. *have*  
*I been a Wilderness unto Israel?* sayes God: they  
 could not say he had. Even as *Christ* said to his  
 Disciples *Luk. 22. 35.* "when I sent you without  
 "purse and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?  
 "and they said nothing: why? many truly of the  
 Saints and servants of God in these times, who can-  
 not boast of much wealth, yet do not speak of  
 want: many wonder how they live and yet  
 they are both living and Life-like. And for  
 once I shall say that first and last, once and again,  
 God hath cast my lot more to satisfaction, than I  
 could have chosen with most deliberation, hereby  
 teaching me that which I have taken for my Les-  
 son, and till I can say it perfectly by his grace, I shall  
 still be learning *to choose nothing for my self*: and  
 though I shall not say with *Leah Gen. 30. 18.* God  
 hath given me my hire, yet I may be excused to  
 think that God hath given me a hire; for albeit  
 Moses's respect to the recompence of reward *Heb. 11. 26.*  
 and it may be not that either, but rather a free  
 love and respect to the name of God, (hallowed  
 be that great and precious Name) *Rev. 2. 3.* give the  
 chief determination in all an upright Mans most  
 serious

our deliberations; nor would he (as he shall not) be reckoned with those men *Math. 6. 2. who have their reward*; yet my present satisfaction with my condition outvyeth, till it is envied of, the lot of those who have sought a fortune by moe means: Let Ravens hunt, and catch, and rugg, and Prey, and croack over what they have gotten, and cry from more, I judge him happy.

-----*Cui Deus obtulit  
Parca quod satis est manu.*

That hath enough and finds no want  
Tho his allowance be but scant.

And I have learned 2 *Kings 5. 26.* "that this is not a time to receive Money, and to receive Garments; and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men servants, and maid servants: I fear something worse than the Leprosie of *Naaman* cleave to the *Gehazi's* of this time. If God will give me my life for a prey, in all places whither I go, by his grace I shall not seek great things for my self: for I fear he will bring evil upon all flesh, "and will break down what he hath built, and pluck up what he hath planted, even the whole land. *Jer. 45. 4, 5.* I love *tactus pasci* a morsel, be it of green herbs, with quietness: and I hope I have learned *Philip. 4. 11.* in whatsoever state I am, *there-with to be content.* Yea and I am the more content, that I find my case somewhat common in the time, To confirme it I give you a story. A vapouring *Time-divine* who hath changed his gang twice already, and possessed two honest mens Churches, one after another, seeking a fatter Pasture, lately met

met accidentally with an honest deprived Minister of his old acquaintance, and seeing him in case better than went, asked confidently; ha sir, how is it that you look so well upon it, in this World? The other, a Notable Man, gave him a Notable Answer: "*why, thus it comes, said he, we go in God's common. Gods common is better pasture than the Worlds inclosure: and what wonder if we who go in Gods common, look better on't than you who go in the Devils inclosure.* At this the petulant man kept silence, and iniquity stopt her mouth. I Remember it is said Psal. 112. 10 *the wicked shall see it, (that which befalls the righteous to his satisfaction and honour) and be grieved, he shall gnash his teeth and melt away: the desires of the wicked shall perish.* Now as we would by faith take God for all things els in the Wilderness; so in the case of fainting and weariness, which as I shewed in the Description, is the last and not the least evil of a Wilderness-condition, we would take him for our strength, Psal. 48. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee* Plal. 73. 26. *my flesh and heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart:* Cant. 8. 5. "*The Church coming up out of the Wilderness, leaneth upon her beloved: Isai. 12, 2, The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: Isai. 33. 2. be thou their arm every morning: Haback. 3. 19. the Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hindes feet, and he will make me to walk upon my high places: to the chief singer on my stringed instruments: if strength quite fail, and be exhausted, he makes the weary to renew their strength*



*Strength*: if strength be weak, and the Soul drives heavily, and comes up with a slow pace in Duty; *then he shall run*: if when they winn to that, they fear it shall not last, nor they be able to continue at that rate; *then they run and weary not, they walk and do not faint.* *Iſai. 40. 31.*

10. And lastly, In the Wilderness we would long and haste much to be through, and press with importunity for a delivery: This we see in David. *Pſal. 42. Pſal. 63. Pſal. 84. and Pſal. 107. 6.* those who wandered in a Wilderness cryed unto the Lord in their trouble. And Moses who had been long in the Wilderness was very earnest to have gone over Jordan, to see the good Land, though for his fault at Meribah it was denyed him. *Deut. 3. 25. 26.* This direction is nothing so strange, as is the disposition of those to whom it is meant: For I begin to observe many who have seen the Lords Glory and Power in the Sanctuary, but too modest, not to say worse (be it from despondency, or from some worse quality) in their Suits for a restoration of these Mercies: Either the length of our affliction hath put us so far out of memory, or the depth of it hath put us so far out of hope of better dayes, that as if there had never been, nor never should be better dayes, we content our selves with the present. Truly it astonishes me to see such a Spirit of slackness possess many; as if the Lord had said to us, *Jer. 29. 5, 6, 7, 10.* "Build ye houses and dwell in them, &c." For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished in Babylon, will I visit you, and

"form any good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place: Our disposition looks like those that were to have a seventy years affliction and long continued Captivity.— And indeed considering *Daniel 9. 13.* *All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our Prayer before the Lord our God, &c.* I observe, that Security and a slack disposition is the attendant, or rather the presage and fore-runner of a continued Affliction: And by the contrary a Spirit of restless importunity, is a comfortable Prognostick of a speedy delivery: See it confirmed in the instances of *Daniel, Nebemiah, Ezra*, who upon the very point of the deliverance were stirred up, and with themselves stirred up the People by Prayer and Fasting to ask Mercies of their God. Take then the direction *Isa. 62. 6, 7.* *Is that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth.*

And thus with patience I have got through the Wilderness, and considered the intimation of the Churches condition, which is the second thing in the words of the Verse. In conclusion, be it minded only, that all that hath been said to this point, doth alike concern the Church in general and Saints in particular: For neither I nor any other who from this mount of contemplation do view the Wilderness at a distance, can expect to have it said to us, as was said to *Moses* of the Land beyond *Jordan*, *Thou shalt not go over into it* but rather as was said to *Abraham*: *All the Land which thou see'st shall be thine: Arise and walk through*

the Land, for to thee will I give it. Not to speak of what we have had, or at the time have, none of us can promise in the Life of our Vanity, that we shall not have, if not at once, yet successively, one after another, all the described parts of the Willness for our Lot.

## *I will allure her.*

THE third thing in the words is, The *Lords* Design, *I will allure her.* Hence the Doctrine is, That the *Lords* great Design in the vicissitudes of all Dispensations to his People, is to gain them to himself; that he may have more of their Kindness and Service. The point is confirmed; 1. From the account Scripture gives of Gods various Dispensations to his People: Take but this Chapter for an instance; he both afflicts her and comforts her, and all that he may have her heart. 2. From the first and greatest Command in the Law of God, which is, *That we love him with all our Heart, &c.* As the Law is understood to be the mind of the King; so the greatest Command of God is the surest Evidence of his Will concerning this, *That we abide only for him, and do not play the Harlot, nor be to another man,* Chap. 3. 3. It is easie courting where we may command: And in this the *Lord* hath the advantage of all other Lovers The Sovereign

ty of his Propriety in us, bears him to challenge our Heart and Service, without once asking our consent, and to resent every repulse and refusal, not simply as a displeasure, but really as a wrong, in defrauding him of what is his own, by a just Title of many respects, antecedent to our voluntary consent. 3. The *Lords* design is so manifest in his kind way with his People, that as it cannot be hidden, so it seems he would have it known, that every one may think him a Suter: Even as when a man frequents the House of his Beloved; presently, by his frequency and other circumstances of his Carriage, the meanest Servant of the House discovers his design: Yea, and the Lord is not ashamed here expressly to tell his Errand, *I will allure her*. Some men if they intend a match with, and have a design upon a person; they set their designs abroad; either in Policy to further them, and thereby to know how the person intertains such Reports, that accordingly they may behave themselves in their intended Address; or else in vain Glory to vaunt of them: So the Lord causes the Report go loud of his blessed purpose, that it may be seen he is both serious in the matter and glorious of it, to have sinners love him. Now the Lord allures either Morally and Externally, or Internally and effectually. Morally and Externally, while he courts Souls with Arguments and Motives fit to take with rational and ingenuous Spirits. Effectually and Internally, when by the Power of Grace he makes such fit Motives and Arguments have their

due weight and work upon Hearts. According to this division, for explication of this Blessed Design of the Lords alluring his People, I shall first touch upon some of the chief Motives that are fitted to this purpose. (for to reach them all I presume not) 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall treat of the inward Power of Grace, that makes these Motives effectual upon the Soul. And 3<sup>dly</sup>, shall conclude the point with Use.

1. Of motives, the first is his own Glorious Excellency outshining every shadow of likeness, let be equality: *Who is a God like unto thee?* And that I am now upon a love designe, and upon the employment of *Eleazer Abrahams servant Gen. 24.* to seek a Wife to my Masters Son, I am concerned as a Friend of the Bridgroom to express my self in the proper termes of such a Subject: And, "O that my heart could indite good matter, that I might speak the things that I have made concerning the King! Let it then be condescended, what is required, by any but willing to be satisfied, to commend a person to the heart of his beloved, and in him you have it. 1. for his Dignity and Descent, *he is the King, and the Kings son:* 2. For his Inducements, "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: yea and *he is full of grace and truth:* and if you speak of a Spirit, a great Spirit, *Isai. 11. 2. 3.* "the spirit of the Lord resteth upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of Counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the

"fear of the Lord &c. 3. For his Beauty, *he is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand, and fairer than the sons of men* 4. For his Disposition and Humour, he is tender, compassionate, loving, meek, condescending, kind and Gracious: O but the Soul may have many a good day, and much sweet contentment in his Company! 5. For his Estate and Fortune, "he is the possessor of Heaven" and earth, the heir of all things; and there is no lack to those that have him, and they have him that love him. 6. For his Use and Vertue, *he is all, and in all*, and in him we are compleat: 7. For his Necessity, he is the person that cannot be wanted, by any that would be happy: *Deut. 30. 20. he is thy life, and the length of thy days.* And if any thing they may do as well elsewhere, let them answer the question *John 6. 68. Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal Life.* "Now this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem. *Cant. 5. 16.*

The Lords second Motive and external allurements in his Words: Words are very charming and enticing things: and *how forceable are right words?* says Job. Hence the Latines wisely give the name of *verba dare*, to that which the Court calls a complement, but the Countrey plainly calls a Cheat. Hence the way of Fishing which catcheth by the Ear: applauded of the greatest Wits, approved and much practised by Lovers, the most ingenious becaule the most scilious Anglers, who busk their hooks with words, and bait with the artificial flow of Complements. Hence, as the world goes, he

the finest man that can say fairest to it: and albeit Solomon both a Wife Man and a great Preacher and Spokes-man hath said *Proverb, 17. 28. even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise*; yet with most men, even a wise man, if he hold his peace, is counted a fool: But the truth is, *multum ille affectus est qui bene didicit loqui, bene qui tacere non minus affectus est*, "he hath attained much who hath learned to speak well: and he hath attained no less who hath learned to hold his peace well. But to say no more in general of the allurements of Words: how specially excellent are the words of the Lord to the purpose of Soul-converting and heart-alluring? *Zach. 1. 13. They are good words and comfortable words, Jer. 15. 16, Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me, the joy and rejoicing of mine Heart. Gold and Treasure is alluring unto any, Honey and Apples to Delicate Persons: And if it were even the mortal forbidden Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil; yet if it be good for Food, and Pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired, it must be had, if the price should be Death, Gen. 3. But the words of God are more to be desired than Gold, sweeter also than Honey and the Honey-comb, Psal. 19. 10. Psal. 119. 72, 103. verses. If nature could propine the World with Golden Apples as a present of her first Fruits, sure those would ravish the Hearts of the greatest Potentates, and would raise Wars among Princes for the possession and keeping of the Tree that bare those, they would be as Apples of Strife, properly and in-*

deed: And the Words of God, which are the Flower and ~~best~~ Fruits of all his Words, are *Apples of Gold* & *Pictures of Silver*, Proverbs 25, 11. They flourish Solidly, Comfort Cordially, and Enrich Mightily. How charming the Lords Words are, we have famous instances in the Gospel, that with his Words he caught those, that were sent and intended to catch and entrap him: he sent them back with this Report, *never men spoke like this man*. And here in the Text it self, *I will allure her*, saith the Lord, *and I will speak comfortably unto her*.

The third chief Motive and Allurement is, The Works of the Lord and his Doings, He hath done for his People, and is daily doing to them, that which cannot but rationally entice any ingenuous Soul to be for him: If God had not loved us, I should have wondered at every thing he does for us: Love is the chief of the wayes of God to us. God loved the World, *God so loved the World*, A Wonder indeed! But after that stupendious portent of his Works to us, *That he loved us*, I shall wonder at nothing he does for us: For what will we not do for those we Love? But again, I must wonder, that he loved us, and in this love to us, he was humbled and emptied for us: For us he came into the World: For us *He took the likeness of sinful flesh*, and the form of a servant: For us he suffered Temptations, Crosses and Contradictions in his Life, and for us he tasted death: *He gave himself for us*: He came under the Law, and Sin, and the Wrath, and Curse of God for us. For us he drank the Cup of astonishment, which

would



would have made all the Elect tremble to Eternity: Yea and he rose and was victorious over death for us: he hath also ascended Heaven for us, and there he interceeds for us: he is our Friend at Court, he stands in the way there, that nothing pass against us: and when there is hazard he warns us; and by his Word and Spirit he keeps intelligence with our Souls, and gives us daily accounts of the true state of our Spiritual business: Thence he issues daily many favours on our behalf, *Psalm 103. 2, and forward, Forgets not all his Benefits, who forgetteth all things Iniquities, &c.* And his negative Mercies are not the least part of what he doth for us: That he prevents and holds off us so many temptations, snares and evils that otherwise would even over-run us: and that for all these he waiteth to be gracious to us, at the voice of our Cry when he shall hear it: And in a word that he is to wholly taken up for us, as if he had nothing else to mind but us. Now to a rational ingenuous Spirit, and every one that deserves to be called a Man, all these will be *the Cords of a Man, and Bands of Love. Hos. 11. 4.* Yea there is some secret alluring quality, in the saddest and darkest of Gods dispensations to the Soul of the Saint: Hence we never find the Godly Soul more fond (so to speak) of its beloved, and more earnest upon him, than in the time of detertion, which of all dispensations is the most afflicting to such an one. If the Lord withdraw, such an one will fall down sick of Love to him; and then go tell him O ye Daughters of *Jerusalem*, that I cannot live in his absence:

absence: And if he do not come quickly skipping like a young Roe or Hart; yea, and if he take not the nearest way over the mountains of Basan, he may come too late, to lay his hands upon the eyes of his distressed Beloved, *Psal. 28. 1. If thou be silent to me* (sayes David) *I shall be like the dead that go down into the pit*: O Lord, I cannot live, I value not Life, if thou be not the God of my Life: I have resolved I shall never be glad, till thou be the health of my Countenance, and make me glad wit' thy Works: For I see little difference, betwixt Sorrow and Joy, if thou be not my chiefest joy. And in our *Text*, the Wilderness is the alluring place to this ungracious froward Church.

The fourth chief Motive wherewith the Lord allures his People, is, his Gifts. Gifts and tokens use to pass betwixt Lovers; and accordingly in this *Chapter*, the Lord allures this whoorish Church with Gifts: So *verse 15. I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope*. A Gift is a tempting and inticing thing; and therefore the Lord hath forbid Judges the taking of Gifts; For "a Gift blinds the Eyes of the Wise, and perverts the words of the Righteous: And therefore *Isai 33. 15. He is a rare man, That can shake his Hands from holding Bribe*. And the more strange it is that men can take so largely from God, and not be thereby enticed after him. Solomon sayes, *A mans gift make room for him, and whithersoever it turneth it self, it is so prosperous, that Every one is a Friend to him that giveth Gifts*, *Prov. 18. 15. and 19. 6.* But let us con-

Consider Gods Gifts: His Gifts are 1. *Free Gifts*: And what is freer than a Gift? For if it were not free, it were not a Gift: None of us can earn the least benefit at Gods hand; For "who hath given to the Lord, and it shall be recompensed to him again? But of him, and through him, and for him are all things, to whom be Glory for ever, *Rom. 11. 35. 36.* 2. His Gifts are *good Gifts*, he is the giver of all good; and "from him every good and perfect gift descendeth, he will with-hold no good from him that walketh uprightly. I confess, *That fore evil unad the Son, Eccles. 5. 13.* may be seen in all other Gifts as well as *Riches*, That they are often kepted for the Owners thereof to their hurt. But God never gave men that Gift, (they have it of the *Evil One*) by abuse to turn good Gifts into evil for themselves. 3. His Gifts are *Rich and rare Gifts*, *Grace and Glory, and every good thing*: yea himself: For the Covenant Gift, is, *I will be their God*: yea our Selves and our Souls. *He gives Life and Breath, Act. 17. 25. Jer. 38. 16. He gave us this Soul.* 4. His Gifts are *large Gifts*, *Act. 17. 25. He gives all things, and 1 Cor. 4. 7. What hast thou that thou dost not receive?* And here I observe, what a great advantage in this assuring us the Lord hath of us all, by his Gifts. If we possess and keep still his Gifts, we cannot handsomly refuse his lure for our kindness and service, for no ingenuous Woman will possess or retain that man's Gift whom she minds not to entertain. But if any should presume disdainfully to return the Lords Tokens to him, and to send back

back his Gifts; then he hath yet the greater advantage: For if we send back all his Gifts, and return all to him that ever we had of him, then must we needs with all send back and return ourselves, and our Souls, and all that we are, or have, or can: For he gave all these; and he requires no more than what he gave. So that of necessity we must either be all for God, or we must be nothing; or else we must be most base in being anything, that we are not for God, and in retaining his Tokens, when we have rejected himself. And now let wild ungracious sinners, look how they shall come handsomely off: And this I would recommend, especially to such as claim to more of a Spirit and Breeding than ordinary; If there be any Gallantry, here is the opportunity to *show themselves men*. 5. His Gifts are frequently renewed, or rather continually heaped Gifts, *He loadeth us daily with his Benefits*: He is still giving and daily sending variety of Rare Mercies, and he is still heaping Benefits upon us; and these (if we intertain the Giver, and give him our Consent) we are to take tokens for good, and an earnest of greater things to be enjoyed; For *the Valley of Achor is a door of hope*. The Fifth chief Motive, wherewith the Lord allures his People, is, his Carriage and Demeanor towards them. A goodly Deportment, a quaint Behaviour with an obliging Carriage is very interesting. *David's* and *Daniel's* Behaviours did much to allay, if not to vanquish the fury and malignity of their malicious Enemies. The Carriage of *Tiberius* the Emperor was such, that there equalled

ad he was, and was called *deliciae generis humani*, the  
 darling of mankind. But, O, how transporting is  
 the Lords way and Carriage towards his People! See  
 how particular Lovers use to frame their Carriage, as well as  
 their Cloathes, into the best fashion and dress, and  
 they study to make their entries *juste pallant quæritur*  
 with all their Sailes up; and would seem to be  
 rather what they should be, then what they are,  
 and indeed be: They put on their best Behaviour  
 with their best Sute, only at Shows and Solemn-  
 Anities; for as they do not wear their best Cloaths,  
 so neither practice they the best Manners, al-  
 ways at home. But as the Lords Carriage to his  
 People, is alluring, at his first appearing, and in  
 his first address to their Souls; so they may ex-  
 pect to have it always the same: For *He is God*  
*and changes not*, and all that is but his ordinary.  
 But behold his Carriage, I pray you; with much  
 Patience he waits upon his Peoples consent, as if  
 their Love were worth the waiting upon; and  
 indeed if it be not so, it is enough that he account  
 it so; in much mercy he overlooks many faults  
 in them, and puts the best construction upon many  
 of their unhandsome and unkind Actions: In  
 much kindness he makes them many a visit:  
 With much earnestness he invites them, with  
 much respect he intreats them, calling them by  
 all their best names, in discretion fitting their  
 Titles to his design. In much condescendence  
 and tenderness he complies with them, and ap-  
 ples himself to them, and all this he doth so e-  
 qually, constantly and faithfully, that they must  
 say,

Says, if they be ingenuous, that *all his ways to them are Mercy and Truth*: And for all this he is content so far to condescend, as to submit himself to their reasonable and impartial Censure: O *Israel* what iniquity hast thou found in me, and *wherein have I wearied thee?* testify against me, Micah. 6. 3. Surely, if ever I did any thing below my self, it was in matching with thee. If I had insisted upon particulars in this, and the Motives already mentioned, where had my rest been? But of Gods Carriage and Way with his People this is the sum, that *it is not the manner of Men*. And I think the Lords ravishing conversation with his People, would easily pass into Admiration with him, who professed (*Prov. 30. 19.*) that he could not know matters much more easie. O that the secular Courtier might, after many changes of shapes and fashions, at last be turned into a *Seraphick lover*! And that the ingine and wit which is thrown (where it evanishes) into the Air of vanity, were employed to court the Uncreated Beauty of that ever blooming flower of Eternity.

The Sixth chief Motive wherewith the Lord allures his People, is, the Example of others, who have led them the way in loving, choosing and commending him. Example is an alluring thing: And the World is more ruled by Example than by Law. Example oft-times usurps upon Reason; sometimes it agrees with her; but seldom is it subject to Her. And thus while men ask rather *quid sit*, what is done, nor, *quid fieri debet*, what ought to be done, *Many follow the broad way that*  
*leadeth*

leadeth to destruction, while but few do find the narrow that leadeth to Life, Many choose rather to go to Hell in company, than to go to Heaven alone. But in Religion and in Travel, I would hold the rule, to choose day Light rather than Company: Nor would I willingly wait for any man till Night, who in the dark, Might lead or mislead me whither he would. If once a man turn his eye off the fixed Light of Scripture, the wandering Star of Example may lead him whither he knows not, and lodge him where he would not. Now how the Lord allures his People by Example, see Cant. 1. 3 4. There the Church finds others before her, whom she would gladly follow: *The Virgins love thee, draw me, we will run after thee*; Lord I love good company well, and therefore let us all go together. And as she finds good Example before her, she leaves the like after her, that allures others to follow her, as she had followed others, Cant. ch. 5, and 6. *Whether is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among Women, whether is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee*: And all this by the Lords direction, Chap. 1. 8. *Go forth by the footsteps of the flock*. O that God would raise up many Lights of Religion in this dark Generation! Many who might be exemplary in Piety, who might go before others, as the bee-goats before the flock, Jer. 30. 8. O that God would perform more in our days, that which he hath promised of old. Zach. 8. 21. *Inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord*.

*Hand of hosts; I will go also.* Mean time, let us follow the Examples we have, and that the Example of those who have chosen and owned the Lord and his way, may be the more alluring to us. Consider 1. that many of them were Kings and Great Men: Religion and the strictness of Godliness is too far above every man, to be below any man: I fear those who think Godliness below them, find it too far above them. *Prov. 24. 7. wisdom is too high for a fool.* 2. Many of them were Wise men. Let our Sages, Senators, and our Counsellours remember this: and if they say, there are few Godly men Wise, I can say to them, there are as few Wise men Godly and chosen to obtain mercy. *1 Cor. 1. 26. not many wise men a'ter the flesh are called and chosen.* But truly, till the Cabinets and Councils of secular heads, and the Conclaves of the Clergy find me amongst them all, four men whom they will undertake to match for wisdom with *Moses, Joseph, Solomon, and Daniel*, I cannot but think, that Godliness doth as well become a Wise Man, as Wisdom doth a Godly man: withal consider, that Godliness and Wisdom are one in Scripture. 3. All of them were Righteous and truly Holy Men, strange it is that so many should choose to be wicked, whilst none can endure to seem or to be called such, and who but the worst man takes it worst to be told of his faults? As strange it is, that every one should choose to seem and to be called Righteous and Good, whilst so few do choose indeed to be such. But is it not as much the Glory of true Godliness, that Hypocrites



for the Merits and Prophane Persons love to go in its Live-  
 ly, and to be called by its name, as it is their re-  
 vouch to have or hold *the forme of Godlines*, whilst  
 they deny the power thereof? 4. They were Impar-  
 tial and Uninteressed men, that (except upon Hea-  
 ven) could not with the least colour be suspect of  
 any designe in their doings: yea did they not re-  
 nounce and go crosse to all Worldly interests of na-  
 ture, Education, Credit, Profit, Pleasure and the  
 like? 5. They were Resolute and Constant in what  
 they did. Indeed if the Saints had Repented their  
 choice, they might have renounced Religion  
 when they pleased, as is said of the Patriarchs.  
 Gen. 11. 15. *that if they had been mindful of that*  
*Countrie, from whence they came out, they might have*  
*had opportunity to have returned, but now they desire a*  
*better Countrie, that is an heavenly.* I should think  
 a poor office to perswade men to that which  
 might repent them: but if they, whose example  
 commend, and whose Practise gladly I would  
 perswade, did with Constancy and Confidence,  
 without Relenting, go thorow and pass the diffi-  
 culties of the flatterings and Frownings, the Fears  
 and Hopes, the Threats and Intreaties of a present  
 World, may I not conclude, that Godliness is that  
 which is not to be Repented of?

It now follows to treat of the inward power of  
 Grace, which maketh these external motives ef-  
 fectual upon the Soul. If any should attempt by  
 violence to storme the Soul of man; it is so sure to be  
 razed to the ground, and brought utterly down  
 nothing before it yeeld (*for voluntas non potest capi*)

the will, which is the Fort Royal of the Soul cannot be forced) that the Assailant may resolve to lose it, before he win it, and to win only the expensive loss of all his labour, and to triumph ridiculously over a *nothing*: for nature and invention have made the Soul a strength impregnable and unaccessable to any power without: and all attempts thence, may certainly prove ineffectual, except a ready course be taken, to gain a correspondence with these within. Also sinners are naturally very thin and ill to be courted: But the Lord as he is good at all that is good, is excellently good at courting and alluring an untoward heart. Others it may be, have got from her at once, their leave with a repulse: yea, my servants in my name have possibly been so served: but, wild as she is, I will not leave her so: I will speak to her my self, and I'll engage, I shall quickly cause her say *yea*: *therefore behold I will allure her*, he can but say to a *Soul*, *follow me*, and *it leaves all and follows him*: he can catch a sinners heart from him ere ever he is aware. *Jer. 20. 7. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived, thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed.* He can mix a Love-cup to the Soul, that shall cause it speak of him when he is gone, and follow him faster than ever it fled from him, and that even when he seems to flee: *we remember thee Love more than wine, the virgins love thee; draw me we will run after thee Cant. 1. 2, 3, 4.* yea more he can make an ointment, the very savour whereof shall cause sinners love him: *because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment*

and out, therefore do the virgins love thee; yea he  
 can give a Soul-charming vertue, to the very  
 words of his name; and cause the very naming of  
 him, kindle a flame of love in the Soul, that ma-  
 ny waters cannot quench: thy name is as ointment  
 that is poured forth. He can open with his finger the  
 stiffest lock that is upon the heart of any sinner. Cant.  
 4. my beloved put in his hand by the hole of the  
 door, my bowels were moved for him: and if it  
 do not open freely, he can drop a little myrrhe from  
 his finger upon it, that shall make it easy: I rose  
 to open to my beloved, and my fingers dropped myrrhe.  
 verse 5 and 6. yea without once asking liberty, he  
 can ravish a sinners heart: and when ever he comes  
 upon such a design, he comes rideing in King Sa-  
 lions Chariot, the midst whereof is paved with love.  
 the daughters of Jerusalem Cant. 3. 9. 10. and  
 after the Kings Chariot, follows a large train, the  
 chariots of Aminadab, waiting to convoy and bring  
 up his willing people, Cant. 6. 12. and if once the  
 soul is got up into the Chariot, the King bids drive,  
 the 13 verse, return, return O Shulamite, return,  
 return; and then farewell thy Fathers house. Psal.  
 137. 10. forget thine own people and thy fathers house.  
 Now the Chariots of Aminadab, the Chariots of the  
 words willing People, run upon these four wheels.  
 In plain termes, the inward power of Grace, where-  
 by the Lord allures sinners, and gains them to him-  
 self, consisteth and is carryed on of these Four.  
 1. A sound and clear Information of the under-  
 standing, and Illumination of the mind: as it is  
 written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of

God: John 6. 45. out of *Iſai. 54. 13.* with *Ier. 24. 7.* and *I will give them an heart to know me.* 1 John. 5. 20. *he hath given us an understanding; that we may know him that is true.* If a man by nature and study were never so judicious and learned, yet ere he be converted and effectually allured, to ingage thoroughly in Covenant with God, he hath need to be taught of God, *that the eyes of his understanding being opened, he may know that which passes knowledge;* Otherways, it may seem a strange saying: but it is that which is noted in the Scripture of truth; and the Scripture expressions of *opening the eyes, giving an understanding,* and the like, make it clear. That the meanest Saint and convert hath more knowledge of *Christ*, and leeth somewhat in him, than the most Subtile, Seraphick, Resolute, or Angelick Doctor unconverted cannot see. So that whatever differences there be betwixt Saving and Common knowledge, there is certainly a difference even in regard of the intensive degree of clearness: or if it be not so, let any man tell me what such expressions mean, 2 Cor. 4. 6, *that God who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and verse, 3 and the Gospel is hid from those that perish, for Satan hath blinded their mindes;* and no doubt, many of these had more natural judgment, and learning with more of the means also, than some of those that believed. To conclude, there is greater odd betwixt a Saint and a Rabbi, than betwixt a Rabbi and an Idiot: for the last two (I now suppose the

S E R M O N on Hosea 2. 14.

them unconverted ) are neighboured in Nature ; but Grace separats the first from them both.

2. The inward power of Grace consisteth in a powerful inflection and Bowing of the Will. *Psal. 110. 3. thy People shall be willing in the day of thy power*: the Lord findeth sinners *Unwilling*, he worketh on them *not willing* and he makes them *Willing*. The Will ( as I said before ) is the strongest hold of the Soul, and the most wilful piece of the man : command the Will and you command the man : the New Will ( say Divines ) is the New Man ; and therefore the Lord is concerned to possess the Will : and this he doth wherever he savingly allures a Soul : for he scorns any should say, that they serve and follow him against their will, all his Souldiers are *Volunteers*: *his People are a Willing People*. I find a Godly Man once saying ( and all such must say it often ) *the good which I would that I do not*. Even as by Conversion oft times the greatest sinner becomes the greatest Saint ; so the Will, before Conversion, the most obstinate and un placable enemy, doth afterward become the most kind and trusty friend to God : for in the midst of many exorbitancies of affections, and irregularities of Practice, and Conversation, the Will retains its loyalty, and persists in its duty to the Lord : and when the whole Soul is in an uproar, and confusion, like that of the City of *Ephesus A. B. 19. 32.* ( a most lively Representation of a Soul in Perturbation ) wherein " some cryed one thing, " some another, for the Assembly was confused, " and the more part knew not wherefore they were

"Come together: All this while the Will is as ready to protest for the *Lord*, as the superstitious *Ephesians* were for their *Diana*. And when in a disorder, all plead liberty, *I consent unto the Law* (says the will) *Rom. 7. 16 and 25 with the mind I serve the Law of God.*

3. The inward power of Grace consists in a sweet Inclination of the *Affections Deut. 30. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy Soul.* The Psalmist Prays *Psal. 119. 36. incline mine heart unto thy testimony* and *Psal. 141. 4. incline not mine heart to any evil thing.* The Affections are ticklish things: By much working and subduing, with frequent turnings, they become as ductile and formable as the potters clay, whereof he makes a vessel as it pleases him. Like those we call *Good Natures*, they are sweet Companions, but not so sure: And as readily you do not leave them, as you found them; so you shall hardly find them where you left them; nor know you when you have them, or when you want them: They are *primum occupantis*, they can refuse no body: They welcome all comers, follow all Counsels, comply with all Companies: And in a word they are compleat Conformists: And they are courted by so many Lovers, that it is much if they turn not common strumpets, to the dishonour and grief of this concerned chaste Suter, *Who is broken with such whorish Hearts, Ezek. 6. 9.* Again, they are like an Instrument with many Strings, they make sweet Melody in Gods

Service, but with the least wrong touch, you Mis-tune them. Indeed the Saints have their affections frequently to Tune, and it requires a time to do it: This causes that the Affection of Grief, which is the *Basse* of the Soul, is oftest in Tune, and keeps in Tune longest with the Saints, *Psal. 57. 7, 8.* When *David's Heart was fixed*, his Harp was out of Tune: when his Faith had got footing, his Affections were to seek. The Case is common and too well known to the People of God: In Preaching, Hearing, Reading, Meditating, Praying, Praising, or any other Duty of our Life, the Affections oft times do not answer. But Grace hath a skilful hand, and is a Musician so expert, that if the *Tenor* of the *Will* be but well set, and the *Basse* of Godly *joy* record well, ordinary failings in the other parts, shall not be much discerned.

4. The inward power of Grace making outward Motives effectual, consists in a Cheerful, Ready Motion of the *Locomotives*, and an actual up-stirring of all that is in a man, by an Act Elicitive of the Imperated Acts of the Understanding, Will, and Affections: So the Schools express it: But to speak plainly, it is Grace causing us to perform indeed and with our Hand, that which it hath caused us to know, will, and Love with our Heart: For sayes the *Apostle*, *It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure*, Philip. 1. 13. And if Grace assist not in this, as well as in the rest, this, *so do*, may make much ado, and cause even an Apostolick Spirit have a

hard pull of Duty, Rom. 7. 18. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.* And by this their defectiveness and short coming in the point of *doing*, the best of Saints may be convinced, that of themselves, they fall as far short in the other points; and that if they cannot go the least step without *Christ's* hand holding them up, they could far less have walked the whole length of their Duty: The *Apostle's* inference is remarkable to the purpose: *I know, sayes he, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to perform that which is good I find not, albeit that to will is present with me.* So that he who of himself cannot do, neither of himself can he know, will or love that which is good. Fail in one, fail in all. This consideration of it self, may refute the whole and half *Pelagian*, *Popish*, *Lutheran*, and *Arminian* Crotchets in the point of Grace. And this shortly is the method of Graces work. Converting a Soul, and alluring a Sinners heart, The Understanding sayes, Gods will is true, the Will sayes it is good, the Affections say it is sweet, the Practice and whole Man sayes it is done. *Thy will be done*; and if it be thy will to save me, and have me to thy self, then Lord, *I am thine, save me*; for *I seek thy Precepts*, Plal. 119. 94. But in the Natural Birth, we know not how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; far less can we reach to Perfection the Mystery of Regeneration: and if we know not the time when the wild Goats of the Rock bring forth, nor can mark when the Hinds



Hindes do Calve, how shall we be able to Cast the Nativity of the Sons of God? For *John 3. 8.* *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* If we know not the way of a man with a maid, *Prov. 30. 19.* how short may we well be judged to have come in our Accounts of the Lords method of courting and making Love to the Souls of his People; and yet we are instructed from the Word of God, to give of all these, an account sufficient to Salvation, with all necessary instruction and comfort. And the like account the Saints are to expect from the Spirit of God, which searcheth all things, even the very deep things of God, *1 Cor. 2. 10.*

The Use of this point I dispatch in these few words of Instruction. 1. We are taught from this, that sinners naturally are very untoward and untractable, to that which is good: they must be allured, enticed, and as it were beguiled and deceived unto that which is equally there Duty and Mercy; *Jer. 20. 7.* *O Lord thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived.* *2 Cor. 12. 16.* The Apostle, who was as a deceaver and yet true, being crafty, caught the Corinthians with guile. It is indeed a *pau frans* a Godly beguile, to beguile a Soul to Heaven and to God: I wish mee were thus beguiled, and that many such deceavers may enter into the World: nor can I say in this deceit, whether the receiver is the Honester Man, or the deceived the Happier.

2. This

2. This reacheth Ministers the Art of Preaching. They must be both serious and dexterous: as friends of the Bridgroom, and Ambassadors for Christ, they must be so well acquaint with the laws of love, as to be able (a Divine blessing concurring) to allure the wildest and most froward Soul. A Minister would be a Seraphick lover, one of the order of Peter: Peter, *lovest thou me?* Lord *thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* Peter, *feed my lambs*, feed my sheep. If our way with sinners, be not the most taken way, let it be the most taking way, and so we shall not mistake the way. Many Ministers are but cold Suters for Christ, and why? they are troubled with an error of the first concoction, they erre concerning the end: they seek their own things, and not the things of Christ, they serve not our Lord Jesus, but their own belly: they eat the fat, and cloath themselves with the wooll, but they feed not the flock: put them to tryal, and it will be found they cannot read the Bible: they lisp like the men of Ephraim, for *Shibboleth*, they say *Sibboleth*; give them but to read that short text 2 Cor. 12. 14. they read it, I seek not *you*, but *yours*; and if they read right, I seek not *Yours* but *You*, they are the greatest of lyars. In a word, they are like many in our days (and those are even like them) who count the fortune more than the person: in this age, a rich man needs not want Children; let him make Images of his Silver, and these shall not want matches, such who for their generosity deserve, as often they get, the reward of a silver

crucifix. But as he that findeth a wife, though he find her in her shirt, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord, *Prov.* 18. 22. So he that winneth Souls, though he win not a penny with them, is wise. *Prov.* 11. 30. Truly the alluring way of preaching is *ars longa*, a thing not soon learned, but where God doth give the tongue of the learned. This art hath many precepts, which I am fitter to be taught, than to teach: and till God send the time of teaching, I take this for the time of learning: who are these that come up from the Wilderness, both better men and better Ministers?

3. We see this in the point, That Religion is an alluring thing. It deserves to be written in Gold: Lord write it upon my heart: it hath that in it which may abundantly endear it to any free Soul. Some who could stand before an armed enemy, have fallen before a naked beauty, Let *Sampson* and *David* be witnesses in the case: sawest thou ever the beauty of the Lord? for how great is his Beauty? and how great is his Goodness? sawest thou ever the beauty of Holiness? a beauty so rare as Rich, a singular beauty! a beauty active and Communicative, it makes all those beautiful that enjoy it: it is not so with the Richest Worldly beauty: an unbeautiful Husband may have a beautiful Wife, whose beauty cannot make him comely: none truly love and espouse Religion but it makes them comely with its beauty. O how would such a beauty be courted in the World? hast thou not the pourtrait of this beauty in thine heart?

heart, the Chamber of her that conceived thee? I should hold my self everlastingly obliged to him that would give me a well done copy: and though I did not like it, for him that did it, yet would I love it for them that it is like. And if this my discourse for linage and likeness could say unto God, thou art my Father, and to Religion and Godliness, thou art my Mother and my Sister, The Piety of my vanity, might excuse the vanity of my Piety, to boast of my Relation to that lovely Family, that brings forth all beauties. I have seen the Heathen *Venus* their Godels of love and beauty, painted with a flaming heart in her hand, (a pretty embleme of that Scripture *Hos. 4. 11. Whoredome taketh away the heart*) beauty maketh daily triumphs with mens hearts, as the Garlands of her victories or the spoiles of her captives, who are no enemies: for amongst the many (as there are many) singularities of feminine victories, these are not the least, that Men conquer none but enemies, Women none but friends. Men take captives against their will, womens captives are all consenters to their own bonds, nor do they once desire to make their escape. Men punish their captives with pain, Women please theirs with torment, and torment them with pleasure. But O canst thou behold the beauty of Holiness, and have thy heart at command? Needs must the lively truth of Godliness be very desirable, when a lying shew and dead picture of it is so lovely, *Mark. 10. 21.* Jesus beholding the young man loved him, for the appearance of good he saw in

in him. How transporting must true Godliness be in the Abstract? and is not the perfection of Piety, the perfection of beauty? since in the concrete and in its imperfection it is so ravishing *Cant.* 4 9. the Church with one of her eyes ravishes Christs heart, a cheek-view, a glance and half a look of a Saint is very alluring. But what if both her eyes be to him? then as one wounded, he cries, *Chap. 6 5. turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.* He falls before his friends, who rose over all his enemies: the Saints beauty overcomes him that overcame the World, it captivateth him that led captivity captive, it triumpheth over him who triumphed over Principalities and Powers, it conquers him who conquered death: for love is strong as death. Set death in the way of love, it can despise and go over it. If jealousie dispute Christs love, he is ready to vindicate himself upon the highest adventures tell me (says he) what token shall I give thee? what shall I do for thee? If thou lovest me, thou must die for me. O jealousie cruel as the Grave! I love thee, and will wash thee in mine own Blood: I love thee, and will give my self for thee: O love strong as Death! O death-conquering Christ! O Christ-conquering Love! O Love-conquering Beauty of Holiness! Look upon Holiness, let thine eyes but observe her wayes: Love her, and give unto her a present of what thou hast. But what is thy Petition, O Queen? and it shall be granted thee? what is thy request and it shall be performed? If I have found favour in thy sight, O friend,

and

And if I please thee, then give me thy Heart, *Psalm 23, 26. My Son give me thine heart*: her Authority might command it, her Beauty might rob it, but her Modesty and Love doth Friendly desire it.

I would not have my discourse fall in the hands of the ungodly: For wickedness proceedeth from the wicked (as saith the Proverb of the Antients, *1 Sam. 24. 13.*) But if I were to speak to ungodly Sinners (O Lord open my closed Lips, then shall I teach Transgressours thy wayes, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee. *Psal. 51. 13.*) I would shew them, what I have yet to add, in the behalf of lovely Holiness: I would sing to my Beloved, a Song of my well Beloved. But the alluring subject, the Kindness I owe to Godliness, with the respect I have for all that love & serve her, invite me to speak, what I know: and therefore, beside all the alluring Motives to Godliness, mentioned in the Explication; I add these things to be considered, wherein she excelleth all her Companions, her Rivals, and all that would partake with her in our Affections. And I shall but point at some Heads, leaving room for the godly Soul, to enlarge in its Meditations, upon the particulars in consideration.

1. Godliness bringeth the Soul upon the greatest Interest: The interest of God, of the Soul, of the Kingdom that cannot be moved, the Crown that fadeth not away, and the things not seen that are eternal; that which eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart

Heart of man to conceive, even that which God hath laid up for those that love him, *Augustus est animus, quem totius delectant*, They are not ill to please, who can be put off with things Wordly. But the Saint is the only person of a great Spirit, who indeed minds high things, even as he is born to great things. The Books *De natura*, or of *Nature*, are too mean a Subject for a Saint: all his Studies are *de Anima*, *de Colo*, & *de Deo*: his Lessons are of the *Soul*, of *Heaven*, and of *God*. His ditan is *re us*, he minds the things that are above.

2. Only Godliness hath that in it, that can maintain and advance his greatest interest. What can all the Pomp, Pleasures and Profits of the World do to a Soul? Do these things make a better man? Lay all these to a wounded Conscience, and they will be as he that taketh away a Garment in cold Weather, as Vinegar upon Nitre, or as he that singeth Songs to a heavy Heart, *Prov. 25. 20.* they may make it worse, they cannot make it better. A mean Subjects Rent cannot bear the Charges of a Crown, nor can all the imaginable affluence of Worldly sensual Pleasures, (the delights of the Sons of Men) fill up the Accounts of a mans Happiness. Are not all things worldly, under an Antient Curse for mans sake? And shall that which is cursed, make us Blessed? The Wisdom of *Solomon* (and who shall come after the King?) hath tryed the Experiment of all things Sublunary, that they are but vexation of Spirit, and a very Vanity: And will a man fill

his Belly with the East-wind? The most refined Spirits and artificial Extracts of natures fullness, hath no more fitness and congruity to satisfy a Soul, than Chaff or Sand hath to nourish a humane Body: Nor did *Nebuchadnezzar* eat Grass with the Osen, until his heart was made like the Beasts. Moreover, the Glory of all things transitory hath not the Civility to see the Soul to its rest: But serve it like wicked Companions, who have debauched a man all the day, and leave him to dry a Kennel at night. O when the Soul shall run out into Eternity, and Death shall draw the Courtain upon all things Worldly, Then it shall be seen, that the things *that are seen*, are but Temporal: And then if the Soul would return to call but for a cup of cold water, of all its sensual Pleasures, it cannot have passage: For there is a great Gulf fixed betwixt, *So that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence*, Luk. 16. 26: To close this consideration, Remember that the wise God called him a fool, a great fool, a rich fool, Who, for that his Barns were full, would say to his Soul: *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry*, Luke 12. 19, 20. But O! the revenue of Godliness: God and the Light of his countenance, Christ and his Merits, the Holy Ghost with his Comforts and Graces, the Justification of Faith, the Peace of God, the Joy of the Holy Ghost, the hope of Glory, are things of great Beauty, to please our Souls withall.



3. The Consolations, Joyes, Pleasures, and Delights of Godliness are the choicest of any: For however (as the Proverb is) *a small thing will make a fool fast, and as little makes him sad*; Yet the Delights of a Wise-man, are such as are the things he delighteth in, *Pf. 4. 7. Thou (thorough the light of thy countenance) hast put gladness in my Heart, more than in the time, when their Corn and their Wine increased.* O Lord, I am as far above the envy of the ungodly, as they are below mine. The Worlds great prejudice against Godliness, is, that they fancy it an unpleasant thing, void of delight: But *aurum est in organo*: And no doubt if men found that delight in Holiness, which they do in wickedness, we should quickly have the World a Proelyte to Godliness. O then that my Words were weighed! and that the World would give me a fair hearing but in this one consideration; no doubt, I had then gained. Delight is a very alluring thing, and *trahit sua quemque voluptas*, every one follows whither his Pleasure and Delight leads him. Nor is it any wonder that so it be; for Delight and Pleasure is the very flower and blossom of Happines, the accomplishment and last act of Blessedness, differing from Vertue and Godliness, as the Flourish from the Tree, the Rose from the Bush. The Scripture placeth the Saints Blessedness, both in the Estate of Grace and Glory, in Pleasure and Delight. That Delight is a mans Blessedness in the state of Grace, see the Command, *Psal 37. 4* the Promise *Isai. 64. 5* the Saints professed practice, of whom Christ is the chief,

chief, and chiefly meant, *Psal.* 40. 3. The Motive given by the Spirit of God, *Prov.* 3. 17. And that Delight hath the same place in Glory (if any that have heard of such a thing as Heaven, did ever once doubt of it) it is more than clear from, *Psal.* 16. 11, *Revel.* 21. 4. with many the like places. If men knew to do the *Epicureans* right in their opinion of Felicity, and could speak as Philosophers, and not as taunting Satyricks, I could rather be, than be called an Epicurean: For Impetuous custom, (even like *Diotrephes*, who in all things loveth the prehemineny) hath usurped so far upon the World, that she prevaieth equally in mens Words and practices, calling things as she lists. Whence a sensual Sow wallowing in the mire of Lust, must bear the name of an Epicurean; whereas, in Truth, an Epicurean is no other than a man placing Happiness in rational Pleasures and intellectual Delights worthy of men. Even as I, according to the Scripture, have placed it in those Delights that are Spiritual and becoming a Saint. The cutting off of a Member deserves not the name of a Cure, but is the Uncomfortable result of the desperate wits of Extremity and Necessity, in a deplorable Case; and an expedient intending the preservation of the whole, with the loss of the part: For better it is to go to Heaven with one Eye, Hand or Foot, than to be cast into Hell with two. The *Stoical Apathetick* method (if the *Stoick* be not as much wronged as the *Epicurean*) is but a pitiful cutting, at best a curb, and wayes a Cure of a corrupt World. A man will

suffer much before he suffer the loss of his Limbs: and he hath wrought but an undesirable Cure, that by cutting off of a Member hath made a man creple or maim: The World will want much before they want their Pleasures and Delights: And indeed who would choose to be miserable? Wherefore the only expedient method in this case, will be diversion, whereby men may save their Members; the World may enjoy Delights and Pleasures, for measure as much greater as for quality better, than formerly in their courses of Iniquity; only they must not run any more in the Channel of Sensuality, but in the vein of Religion and Spirituality. Consider then the Delights and Pleasures of Godliness, and then let reason say, who hath the sweetest Life, the Saint or the Brute.

1. For their nature, they are unspeakable and full of Glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8. the Word is significant in its own Language *καὶ δόξα*, a glorified joy; a very Heaven upon Earth: A Joy of the same Nature, though not to the same degree, with that in Heaven. The Saints Delights in Earth, are a cup of the same Wine, for kind, which they shall drink in the Kingdom of their Father, though it be not of so high a colour, nor of so rich a relish to us here in the Cellar, as it is to them at the Kings Table. Holiness is much mistaken in the World, and so is Heaven and Happiness, which is no other, than the top and upper end of Holiness, or Holiness in its Holy-days clothes. If men would consider this, I suppose

some should be as afraid of Heaven as they are of Holiness: Yea I am really of the mind, if God should open a door in Heaven to a Prophane Liver, and say, Come up hither, that he should not dare to enter: The Beauty and Light of that Glory, so contrary to Darknes, would dazle and confound, and utterly undoe him. If a man should be permitted, yea commanded to throw himself into a burning Fiery Furnace, like that of *Babylon*, durst he yet do it? Yea though he were very cold and never so much needed to be warmed. And who among Hypocrites or Prophane Livers *shall dwell with devouring Fire?* Who amongst them *shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Isa. 33. 14. In a word, men must either say that it is a great Unhappiness to be in Heaven, or that it is their great Happiness to be more Holy.

2. The pleasures and delights of Holiness are of the highest descent, they spring from the rock of Eternity. And O! how pure? how wholesome? how pleasant must they be? The pleasures which God gives his People, have himself for their spring, and life for their vertue. Psal. 36. 8. 9. *with thee is the fountain of life.*

3. They have the deepest root, and so farrest in upon the Soul: as the delights of Hypocrites, Worldlings and prophane persons are but the dreggs; so they are but the scrufe and pairings of pleasures: their pleasures are but Skin-deep: in the midst of all their laughter, the heart is sad: they are as Hypocritical in their delights as in their duties. The Soul and Conscience of a wicked man hath

nothing like Christ but this, that they are never seen to laugh: they are men of sorrows indeed, and many sorrows are their portion: That is appointed to them of God. *Psal. 32 10.* with *Iſai. 65. 13, 14.*

4 The Consolations, Joys, Pleasures, and delights of Godliness are the most strong and efficacious: in the multitude of their frightening, repenting, tempting, doubting and inquiring thoughts, *Gods comforts delight their soul. Psal. 94. 14.* These turn their mourning into dancing, they make them sing in a Prison, and rejoice in tribulation: But Affliction maketh a wicked man soon to forget his pleasures, as waters that pass away: yea and the memory of their former delights, is to their present sorrows, as he that *singeth songs to a brassy heart,* and their song is, *miserum est fuisse felicem.* It is the greatest misery to have once been happy.

5. The delights of Godliness are pure and chaste delights, they are such as the Soul enjoys with Gods blessing and approbation, yea with his command. *Psal. 37. 4. delight they self also in the Lord.* the pleasures of Godliness are our duty. And for their Chastity, they are like the pleasures that a man hath in the company of his lawful Wife. *Prov. 5. 19. Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished with her love:* the word in its own language is, *Erre thou always in her love:* If a man must play the fool, let him do it lawfully: and if it be an error, it is an innocent one to erre with Gods approbation. But the delights of wickedness are impure, whoorish and strange delights

such as a man hath, in the company of a harlot : and " why will thou my son be ravished with a " strange woman, and embrace the bosome of a " stranger ? *Prov. 5. 20.*

6. The delights of Godliness are secure and safe delights. This follows from the former. Here the Soul is ridd of all fear of going too far : there is no excess in those pleasures : *Eph. 5. 18.* in wine there is excess : but be filled with the Spirit ; there is no excess in that, the more you drink of that the more sober you are : and also in the delights of Godliness, there is no fear of the sad after-claps of sorrow, that conclude sinful pleasures : for the end of that mirth is *heaviness. Prov. 14. 13.* The ungodly mans sinful pleasures are but a showr-blink that ends in a tempest : their delights are like the pleasures of drunkards, who drink and swill till their head ake, and their heart be sick : and they have their sentence with *Babylon. Jer. 51. 39.* " In " their heat I will make their feasts, and I will " make them drunken, that they may rejoice, " and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith " the Lord

7. This follows from all that is said, The pleasures and delights of Godliness are constant and induring pleasures. *John 16. 33.* *your joy no man taketh from you.* As the World doth not give the Saints joy and delight, so neither can it take these from them. The Saints delights in Godliness, are like spring waters that will rise as high as they fall in their courses. As they descend first from Heaven, so they never cease running till they ascend thither again

again: they are like living running waters, that make what turnings they will, about mountains or whole countreys, in end they fall into the Sea: The River of pure pleasures, that *maketh glad the* ~~the~~ *Curv* of God, hath its outgoing into the Sea of that fulness of joy, that is in Gods presence, and that ocean of pleasures that are at his right hand for evermore. And now I go forth unto the streets, and stand in the open places and cry: O all ye who love pleasures turn in hither, tast and see that the Lord is Gracious. I am so little an enemy to pleasures, and so much an Epicurean in opinion (as you see) that if any man shall shew me pleasures more pleasant than those of Godliness, I am content to change for the better: and that shall be when men and beasts make an exchange of Soules; water and wine of natures and vertues; and Heaven and Earth shall change places; when evil shall be good; black shall be white; bitter, sweet; darkness, light; crookedness, straight; heaviness, light; when cold shall be hot; and time shall be Eternal.

4. Godliness is the only perfect, harmonious, and uniforme of all the Soules lovers: what lame and defective pieces are all her companions? I said as much in the description of the inward power of Grace as may shew, how exactly commensurable her perfections are to all the powers, and to the whole capacity of a man: she satisfieth the understanding, will and affections; and exercises the whole man. But of her defective companions, some want the head, as error, superstition, profaneness: whatever of the will and affections, and

practice be in these, yet they are against the truth of a well-informed judgment: some want the heart as Hypocrisie and formality, whatever of knowledge, profession or practice be in these; yet the will and affections do not consent: some want the hands and feet, and are meer trunks; as all those who pretend to know, will and love their Masters will, but do it not. And for their moral qualifications, The first is a fool; the next is a knave; and the last is a sluggard. But compleat Godliness hath the head, heart, hands and feet, with all the parts of a perfect man: and is a wise, trusty and active piece. And as it is compleat and perfect so it is most uniforme and harmonious. *Ungodliness* is a *City of Division*, a *Babel of Confusion*, *it parteth chief friends, and putteth a man at variance with those of his own house*: the wicked are like the *troubled Sea*: their lusts are continually fighting and warring one against another, and altogether against Holinels: whence are Wars and fightings, but from your lusts? *Jam. 4. 1.* Ungodly mens lusts are like themselves, for extremes they are, and they are like extremes that differ alike from themselves and from the mids: Avarice differeth as much from Prodigality her Sister Vice, as from Liberality her contrary vertue. But Godliness sets a man at one with himself: it is a heart-uniting thing, *Psal. 86. 11. unite my heart to fear thy name.* It makes a good understanding betwixt the understanding, the will, the affections, and the whole man. And *blessed be the Peace-maker, shall he not be called the Child of God?*



5. Is it not the great Glory of Godliness, that as many do lute her, as few do espouse her, and she hath as many pretenders, as few matches? Are not all men, her pretenders? Do not her greatest adversaries pay her the Devotion, at least of a complement? Is not their great request to her, like that *Isai. 4. 1. only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach?* Do not her greatest enemys Glory to be called her servants? Call an evil man good, and you cannot please him beeter: for he hateth as much to be called evil, as to be good; And loveth as much to be evil, as to be called good. And it is yet as much her Glory that few do enjoy her. But pray, whom doth she reject? are they any but the Ungodly? those unworthy Persons that were brought in upon her, and came to mock her: nor doth she despise any that have not first despised her: or should she prostitute her self to such as care not for her? none get a Rejection from her, without their own consent: and they take it before they get it: for as none are Godly, so neither are any Wicked against their will.

Lastly, Beside the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, which makes Godliness profitable to all things: *1 Timoth. 4. 8.* It is the ready way, even in ordinary probability, to give a man honour, wealth, and pleasure, and to continue these with him, yea even in this World: (I would these tymes did give a better testimony to this Observation: but I hope the Observation shall stand when some are fallen; and shall continue, when these times are past way.) for that these

these things are as naturally purchased by good and  
 vertuous, as lost by lewd and wicked practices.  
 And how shall a man have Honour, who prostitu-  
 tes himself to courses wherein he hath none, but  
 base and unmanly persons for his Companions?  
 Are not Pages, Grooms, and Lackeyes, as good fel-  
 lows as their Lord himself at Whoreing, Drinking,  
 Swearing, Carding, *where all are fellows*? Is not  
 my Lord well Honoured, when he sends his man  
 to convoy a Whore to the Chamber, who (be-  
 cause upon the Road he uses to lead the way for  
 his Master, thinks he will do him the like service  
 here, and serves him with his own remains? But  
 who doth not Reverence the Presence, and Honour  
 the Face of a really Good man? Yea many a time  
 such an one hath more Reverence than God him-  
 self with Evil men, who dare do many things in  
 the Eyes of God, that they will be loath to do in  
 presence of such a man? Yea how convincing  
 many a time is the Carriage of a Godly man to his  
 greatest Enemies? Surely *thou art more Righteous*  
*then I* (said Saul to David) and when a Mans  
 ways please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to  
 be at peace with him, Prov. 16. 7. An excellent Di-  
 vine (I think it is Greenham) sayes well; Let  
 not a Saint be afraid of Men; for that by his Prayers,  
 he hath more Power of their Hearts, than they them-  
 selves have. And the Scripture sayes the same,  
 1 Pet. 3. 12. And who is he that will harm you, if  
 he follows of that which is good? And how well  
 had it been with the Profane Russian, that he  
 had spent that Time, Strength, Estate, and Cre-  
 dit

dit for God, in the way of Godliness, with the sweet and sure gain of his Soul, which he hath wasted in rifling and base living, with the evident hazard of his Soul's ruine, if that may be said to be ruined that was never repaired, nor in case. But be it yet that the godly man attaineth not to these advantages Temporal; The Peace of Righteousness, the Contentment of Soberness, the Confidence of Faith, and the Rejoycing of Hope, do more than compenle all that is wanting elsewhere, and cause that a good man is satisfied from himself, *Prov. 14. 14.*

Now let all that hath been said, be a reproof of the Worlds hard opinions of Godliness, and give cheque to their unkind dealing with her, as if she were a sorry Piece, to be desired by none, but such as would be miserable. I have not yet travelled so far, but that I can remember from whence I set forth: In my entry upon the point, I told my Erand was with *Eleazar Abraham's* Servant. *Genes. 24.* To seek a Wife to my Master's Son, and to Espouse and bring home Souls to Christ: And now to conclude, Let me with them, *Gen. 24. 57, 58.* Call the Damsel, and enquire at her Mouth, *Wilt thou go with the man?* And she said (so be it said unto me) *I will go.*

The fourth and last thing we learn from the point, in a word, is, to put a good construction upon all Gods Dispensations to his People; for his thoughts towards them are *Thoughts of Peace, and not of evil,* to give them an expected end, *Jer 29. 11.* And in compliance with the Lords great design, in the

vicissitudes of all our Lots, let us learn to give him more of our Hearts: For he brings his People into the Wilderness, and there he allures them. If these Melancholly times do but make us more tractable, condescending and kind to *Christ Jesus*, we may well expect, that he will speak comfortably unto us.

*I will bring her into the Wilderness, and will speak comfortably unto her.*

**A**nd thus I am led by the hand into the fourth and last thing proposed to be considered in the Text. The *jointure and consideration* of the Churches affliction and the Lords *Consolations*. *I will bring her into the Wilderness, and I will speak comfortably unto her.* Hence the Doctrine is, That the Lord useth to visit his peoples sadest afflictions with his sweetest consolations. He is a God that comforteth those that are cast down: He is his way and use, The Apostle *1. 2. Cor. 1. 3. abundant consolation by Christ, as their sufferings for Christ abound.* And reading through all the Scripture, I never find the Saints more indulged with the sweet consolations of God in his kind manifestations, than in the greatest afflictions. Reasons of this are, 1. His free love and kindness. So it becomes *as with whom the fatherless find mercy*: He loveth and pitieth the Stranger, he is a Father of the Fatherless, and a Husband to the Widow, a Judge of the oppressed out of his holy habitation: He will be known in adversity to be a Friend. 2. Their necessity: Then they need consolations, and then they come in season: *Prov. 30. 6. Wine should be given to those that are of heavy hearts: When I said my foot slipped, they held me up.* This was a mercy that came in good season. 3. Their fitness: As then they most need

consolation.

# S E R M O N on Hosea 2, 14.

179

solations, so then are they fittest to receive and intermit them. The Lord will not have his Consolations to run by and be spilt, by pouring them out into full vessels: But *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they shall be filled.* I spoke before upon the second part of the Text. how afflictions fit for consolations; and that therefore, God sometimes brings his people into the Wilderness, that thus he may fit them.

Most sweet are the Consolations wherewith the Lord tryts his people in their afflictions. 1. He draws forth to them the bowels of most tender compassions. In *all their affliction he is afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9. Jer. 31. 20. *Since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him*, Zach. 2. 8. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* It is a very acceptable consolation to an afflicted person, to mourn with them, and to be touched with their condition: And the Lord cries *alas* at every touch of affliction that comes upon people: Not need they fear he shall forget them: For whatever is a mans pain, it will not fail to put him in mind.

2. He owne them and takes notice of them, when others flight them and care not for them. *Psal. 31. 7. He knows their Soul in Adversities*, *Psal. 142. 4, 5. I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me: No man cared for my Soul; I cried unto thee O Lord, I said thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living*, Jer 30. 16, 17. and forward: The Lord promises with great Mercies to owne his Church, because in the 17 verie, *They called her an out-cast, saying, she is Zion whom no man seeketh after*, Lament. 1. 12. *It was nothing to those that passed by, to see all that she suffered.* But her desire is frequently throughout the Chapter, *Behold O Lord for I am in distress.* Yea and he will behold, *For his eyes behold the things that are equal*, Act. 7. 34. *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning.* This is a time, wherein there be few to Redeem our wrongs done to the Church of God and his Saints and servants, and fewer there be to right them: And therefore that Prayer is good, *Psal. 17. 2. Let my Sentence come forth from thy presence: Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.* And the Saints may have justice for the wrong: For he

And he will visit and comfort to require it with his hand, P. 1014.  
 The Lord will visit them & more special presence, P. 91. 11.  
 In the valley of the shadow of death there are with me, Mai. 43. 2. When thou  
 goest through the Waters I will be with thee, &c. The Lord  
 is present to those that fear him: but in affliction he goes  
 very near them. They have alwayes his special presence, P.  
 100. 13. The upright shall dwell in thy presence. But in  
 trouble they have a more special presence. His presence is ei-  
 ther a secret supporting presence, whereby his people are held  
 up, they know not how: For many a time when the Saints  
 look back upon these times, wherein they said, *their strength*  
*and their hope is perished from the Lord,* and see the way that  
 they have come, they wonder how they have win through:  
*But God was with them whilst they knew it not.* Or else his  
 presence is a manifest comforting presence, and that the Scrip-  
 ture calls his *visiting of his people.*

4. Then the Lord visitates his afflicted people many a  
 kind visit: And in those visits, 1. He salutes his people with  
 Peace: *He will speak Peace unto his people, and to his Saints:*  
*in the world ye shall have trouble* (sayes he) *but in me ye shall*  
*have Peace.* 2. He gives a hearing to all his peoples Confes-  
 sions, Complaints and Petitions: *Lord thou hast heard the de-*  
*sire of the humble.* 3. He speaks his mind to his people, both  
 concerning their Duty and the issue of their lot. The times of  
 the Lords visit to his afflicted people, are the times wherein  
 he communicateth most of his secrets to those that fear him.  
 The Soul that goes through manyfest afflictions, is ordinarily  
 the wisest and most experienced Soul: *Heman the Exile,*  
*who was so long afflicted, even from his youth, was one of*  
*the wisest men in his time.* Speculation speaks of cases like  
 a *Geometrier,* Experience speaks like a *Traveller:* That sayes  
*that which our ears have heard,* this sayes, *that which our*  
*eyes have seen, declare we unto you.* 4. In his Visits, he gives  
 his people tokens for good: He comes never empty-handed  
 to them, But gives them such things, whereof they may say  
 in their straits, when he seems to have forgotten them, *Lord*  
*where are these?* 5. And further (as the original hath the  
 words of the Text) he *speaks to his peoples heart:* He satisfies  
 them concerning his dispensations, and convincech them of

## S E R M O N

the equity and kindness of his dealing with them. He sheweth them such rational accounts of his dispensations, as will make them say, he hath taken the best way with them, and will make them sing, *Thou hast dealt well with thy servants*. Ps. 135. 6. And by convincing them that good is the Word of the Lord. *Isa. 39. 8.* He makes them say from their Heart, that if variety of lots were in their offer, they would choose the present: O but that speaks well: I will speak to her heart: I will even speak as she would have me. Thus he confirms by his kind visits.

5. He comforts his people in affliction, by being all things to them, and doing all things for them. Thus he kindles the Saints in their afflictions making applications to God, with Titles suited to their condition: And it is *God* (saith the Psalmist) *that doth all things for me.* He is the shepherd of Israel: If they be scattered, he gathers them: if they go astray, he leads them; if they want, he feeds them, and *maketh them lie in green Pastures, by the still waters*: If they be in hazard, *he is their refuge*: Are they sad? *He is the Health of their Lamentation*: Are they weak or weary? *He is their Strength*, and with him is everlasting strength: Are they sinners and guilty? *He is the God of their Righteousness*: Is Law intended against them? *He pleads their cause; and stands at their right hand*: Is the judge an unfriend to them? *He is their judge, and their Sentence cometh forth from his presence*: Do Kings or others command them to be Afflicted, Fined, Beaten, Imprisoned, Confined, Banished? Then *Psalm 44. 4.* *Then say my King, O God, command deliverances for Jacob*: Have they no Friends, nor any to do for them? He that is the kind Lord can cause men shew them *the kindness of the Lord*: That which the Scripture calleth *the kindness of the Lord*. 1 Sam. 10. 14. Inasmuch as much in it, as may shew us, that the Lord makes men Instruments at his pleasure, to shew kindness, and do a good Office to his people. And when the Saints and Servants of God come to count kindness, I hope there will be found more of the kindness of the Lord, than of men, in Countesses that are done them. I am so little a Patron of unthankfulness, That I shall thank him kindly, and pray (as our Lord's Proverb is) *The Lord reward him that doeth his will, whether with his will, or against it.* But truly when I think

men I meet with less kindness, where I might have expected more; and more where I might have expected less; The Meditation of this Scripture expression, *To shew the kindness of the Lord*, hath taught me the more earnestly to ask mercies of my God, and to leave the expressing and dispensing of it to himself, by Means and Instruments of his own choosing: He can make a *Babylonian* Enemy to intreat his own Servant *Jeremiah* well.

6. To add no more, for that hath all, The Lord comforteth his afflicted People by *Christ Jesus*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. This is the Saints unchangeable Consolation, in all changes of Dispensations; and truly our Consolations will come to a poor account, if *Christ* be not the sum of them all, in all Cases and Conditions: *Christless comforts* will leave us *comfortless Christians*.

The Use of this point shall be, for strong Conclusion to the Saints in their greatest afflictions. The Lord hath laid it straitly upon us, to comfort his People in their afflictions, *Isa.* 40. 1. 2. and here, he takes it upon himself to be their Comforter: He hath given this Name and Office to his Holy Spirit, *The Comforter*; and shall not the afflicted People of God with these words be comforted, and comfort one another? But according to the rule of Scripture, Comforts and Duties must be marched together: Nor must we expect in the event a Separation of those things, that God hath joyned in the intimation. Wherefore, if we would have much of the Lords heart, Let us give him much of ours: If we would have him comfortable to us, we must be kind to him: If we would have him speak comfortably to us, we must give our consent to him: If we would have him speak to our Heart, we must be to his Heart: For so the Text runneth, *Therefore behold I will allure her, I will bring her into the Wilderness, and I will speak comfortably unto her.* Now to the God of all Consolation, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be All Glory, and Dominion, and Praise, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Written in the Wilderness 1665*

F I N I S.



7  
e  
e  
y  
l  
s  
t  
-  
s  
-  
t  
s  
/2  
o  
it  
s,  
ar  
y  
of  
-  
ad  
ne  
in  
ne  
we  
ld  
to  
be  
all  
all  
o-  
o-